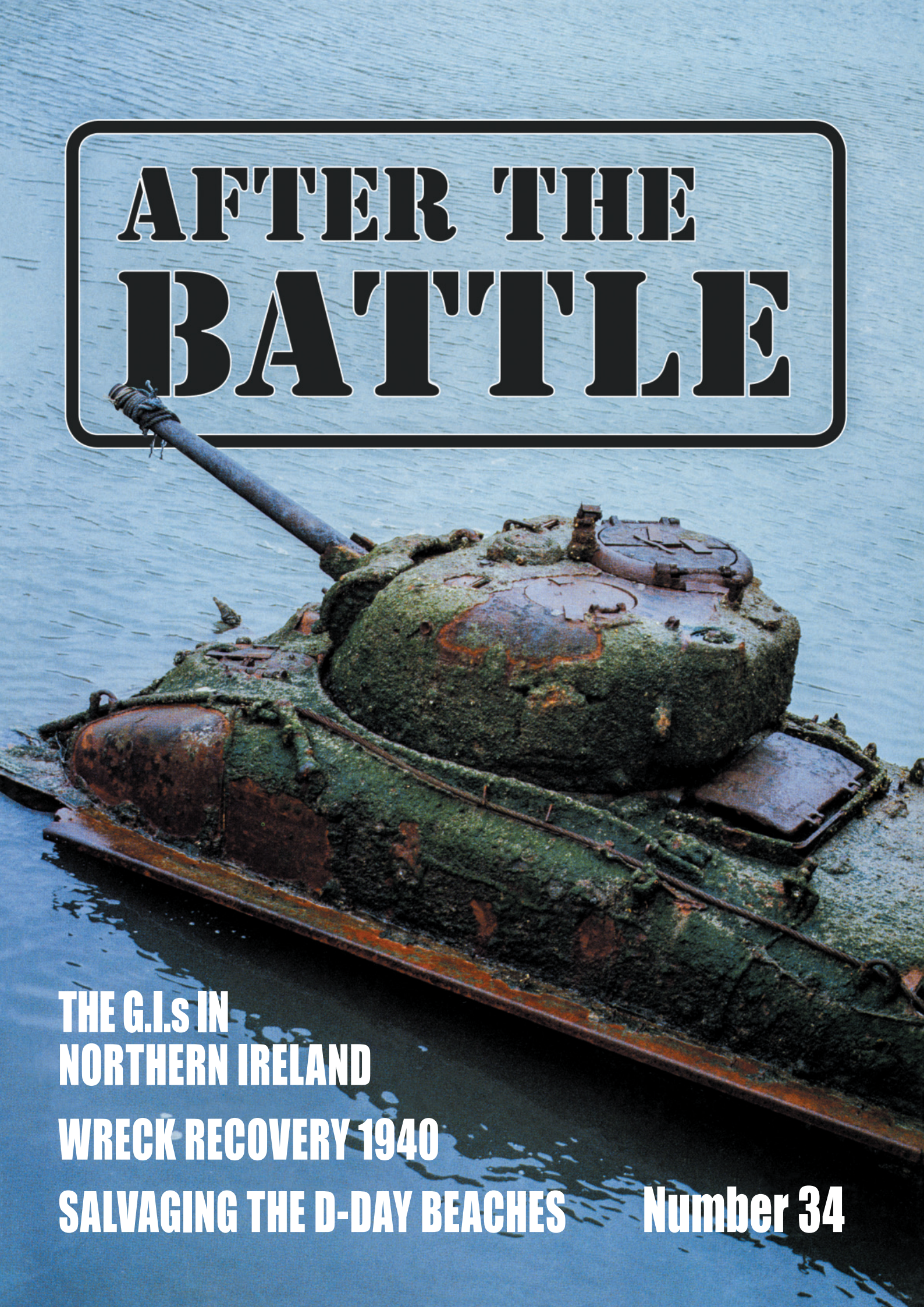
AFTER THE BATTLE



THE G.I.s IN NORTHERN IRELAND

WRECK RECOVERY 1940

SALVAGING THE D-DAY BEACHES

Number 34

AFTER THE BATTLE

NUMBER 34

Edited by Winston G. Ramsey

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Front Cover: The DD Sherman recovered from the sea off Port-en-Bessin by Jacques Lemonchois (who jointly holds the salvage rights of the Normandy beaches with Jean Demota) in July 1980 to be displayed at the new Musee Sous-marin de la Guerre due to be opened at Commes in 1982.
Centre pages: An early recovery by Jean Demota was 'Bold' now displayed at Courseulles.
Back Cover: The monument recording the official landing of the first American troops in Northern Ireland and Europe in Donegall Place, Belfast.

Acknowledgements:
The G.I.s in Northern Ireland is largely based on accounts in *Northern Ireland in the Second World War* by J. W. Blake published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office and *The G.I's* by Norman Longmate published by Hutchinson & Co. Ltd.

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Convoy NA-1 sailed quietly away from Halifax, Nova Scotia, on January 10, 1942. Fourteen days later it arrived off Lough Foyle. Two large transports detatched themselves from the convoy and two days later the *Strathaird* and the *Chateau Thierry* lay at anchor in Bangor Bay. Four small tenders, the *Canterbury*, the *Princess Maud*, the *Maid of Orleans* and the *Royal Daffodil*, set out from Belfast to the transports and soon headed back to the Pollock and Dufferin Docks.

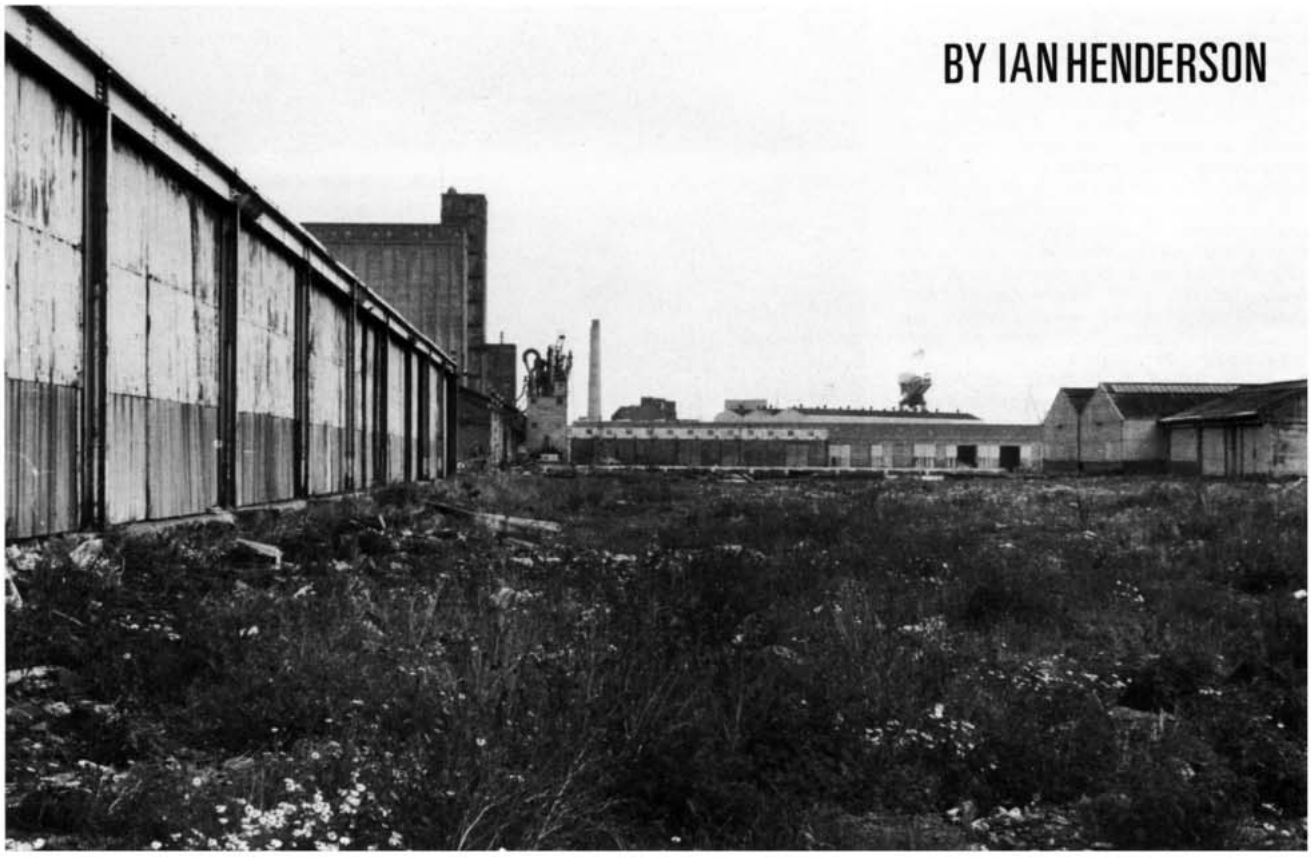
At the Dufferin Dock a distinguished group stood waiting — Sir Archibald Sinclair, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Air; the Duke of Abercorn, Governor of Northern Ireland; Mr. J. M. Andrews, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, plus the heads of the Armed Services. Paraded with them was the band of the Royal Ulster Rifles. The gangplank of one of the tenders was set down, the band struck up 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and a young man walked nervously down to the quay. He was Private, First Class, Milburn H. Henke of Hutchinson, Minnesota, USA — the first GI to arrive in Europe. However, the scene was spoiled by the fact that the tenders arriving at Pollock Dock had already discharged their troops and several hundred marched past the welcome ceremony as Pfc. Henke was stepping ashore! The official greeting was given to Major General Russel P. Hartle, Acting Commander of the United States Army Northern Ireland Force (USANIF) and the whole event is commemorated today by a stone column standing outside the City Hall, Belfast.

THE G.I.s IN N

Opposite top and above: **Under the headline 'The Grand Alliance against the Axis — United States troops land in Ulster', these pictures were released showing the arrival of the first troops on January 26, 1942 at Dufferin Dock (Imperial War Museum).** *Opposite bottom:* **How are the mighty fallen! With nothing to mark the historic site of the landing, the dock is now just waste ground having been filled in under a reclamation project.**

ORTHERN IRELAND

BY IAN HENDERSON



Above: **The first American to officially set foot in Great Britain was Private First Class Milburn H. Henke from Hutchinson, Minnesota of Company B, 133rd Infantry when he stepped ashore in Dufferin Dock, Belfast, Northern Ireland. The scene was immortalised by Northern Ireland's most famous artist, William Conor (born in 1881 and who died in 1968). He was the only artist given permission to record the historic occasion and his crayon drawing, 24in by 19in, was completed by March 23 when Pfc Henke inspected it in Conor's studio** *(centre)* **at 18 Brookhill Avenue, now derelict on the fringe of one of the city's trouble spots. In 1943, William Conor received a letter from the US Army ETO HQ inquiring if it were true that he had painted a picture of the original landing of American troops and indicating an interest in purchasing the picture. However, it is not known what happened to it and it cannot be found today. These photographs, traced by our man in Washington, David Hale, may well be the only illustrations of the drawing and they were received with delight by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland when our author for this article, Ian Henderson, gave them copies, although they came too late to be included in a book on William Conor's life and work.** *Right:* **His studio was also used to publicise Henke with an advance copy of the first edition of The Stars and Stripes, the US forces WWII newspaper, for Saturday, April 18, 1942.**

Northern Ireland had become particularly important for transatlantic movement after the fall of France, when all shipping was routed around the north coast of Ireland, and the arrival of the troops was the first phase of Operation MAGNET which resulted from the meeting between President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill held in Washington in late December 1941. At this meeting it was agreed that US troops should take over the defence of Northern Ireland. The involvement of the United States with Northern Ireland did not commence at this time, however, as it had begun many months previously when the USA was ostensibly still neutral. Because of concern over the protection of Atlantic

'American forces march through a town in Northern Ireland to the parade ground where they will be reviewed by Major General Russel P. Hartle, Commanding Officer of the USANIF.' This caption was all Ian Henderson had to go on to try to locate where this photo was taken in March 1942 by Signal Corps photographer Larry Williams. An attempt had even been made to censor out the shop names on the original. Ian enlisted the help of the Belfast Telegraph which published the photograph with a request to readers: 'Will someone please identify the man in the paddy hat and tell us about the day he saw Yankie soldiers march proudly into his town.' Although some letters claimed the soldiers in the picture were Home Guard, not Americans, the appeal soon bore fruit and even sparked off some debate as the newspaper had described the road surface as being constructed using cobble-stones. One reader pointed out that the stones were, in fact, square setts quarried in the Mourne Mountains (in the south-east corner of the province) in the early 1930s and transported to Londonderry on the northern coast. The road was identified as being Duke Street since demolished to provide a new trunk road. Believe it or not, this is Duke Street today!

Once identified, the picture tied in with those *(below)* of an early inspection by Major General Hartle held on the parade ground *(above)* of what is now Ebrington Barracks Londonderry — the present British Army HQ of the 8th Infantry Brigade. Until the mid-1960s, the barracks were HMS Sea Eagle, the joint anti-submarine school which worked along with RAF Shackleton squadrons at Ballykelly. The Belfast Telegraph reader's confusion with Home Guard troops would have been caused by the British-style steel helmets. These were the M1917A1 type worn by US forces in and after the First World War. It was replaced on June 9, 1941 by the M1 helmet and mass production commenced shortly thereafter although these obviously took time to filter through to overseas units.

convoys and the 'lend-lease' agreements, the USA had a desire to ensure she had adequate air and sea bases if she were to enter the war. In March 1941 Britain secretly agreed to place two naval bases and two flying boat bases at the disposal of the USA — one of the naval bases being Londonderry and one of the flying boat bases Lough Erne.

The US Government was to be responsible for building the installations and US contractors, under the supervision of American engineers, were to do the work. In the event of war, the bases were to come under United States control. In June 1941 work commenced with 362 US 'technicians' arriving in Londonderry and by October the number had risen to nearly 1,000. All the activity was highly secret and by the second week of December, when the USA entered the war, the work was virtually complete. At Londonderry, in addition to the harbour installations, there were camps at Holcomb, Lisahally, Beech Hill, Springtown, Clooney Park and Rossdowney, a hospital at Creevagh and a magazine at Fincairn Glen.

At Lough Erne a main base was built at Ely Lodge, a repair base at Killadeas, an ammunition depot at Kiltierney Deer Park and a hospital at Necarne Castle. (In the event the US Navy did not use these facilities and they passed to the US Army and subsequently to the RAF.) The first formal use of the Londonderry facilities came on January 21, 1942 when, after escorting convoy HX 169 across the Atlantic, the destroyers *Wilkes*, *Roper*, *Madison* and *Sturtevant* entered the Foyle. Thus all the covert activity by the US 'civilians' enabled American forces to play an effective part in the war in Europe almost from the word go.

We are indebted to the 8th Infantry Brigade for allowing Corporal Cadman to take this comparison for us, and to the Royal Anglian Regiment standing in for the American troops. An exact match was not possible because of the non-availability of the precise room from which Larry Williams took the original photo and for the fact that, for security reasons, parades today are not held at the top of the square. For the same reason, car registration plates have been obliterated at the request of the security forces.

Above: Another early inspection was this visit on February 18 by the United States Ambassador, John G. Winant, together with Major General Hartle and General G. Cheney, Commander USABI, to the 63rd Signal Battalion at Carrickfergus on the north shore of Belfast Lough some ten miles from the city. This camp dated from the First World War and delighted in the name Sunnylands Camp. *Bottom:* A place in the sun for these GIs parading in the rain. *Below:* The whole area has now been transformed into a housing estate and no identifiable traces of the camp remain to be seen although its name lives on.

Properties requisitioned for American headquarters buildings ranged from castles to terrace houses. *Above:* This is Knock-na-Moe Castle at Omagh, more or less in the centre of Ulster. It was taken over by the 34th Division as its HQ and was pictured here on November 5, 1942. (Earlier that year their headquarters was based at Ballymena see page 37-38.) *Below:* After the war the castle became an hotel but the original building has since been destroyed in a terrorist attack. Lost at this time was a table marked by a plaque which commemorated a reputed meeting there by Eisenhower and Montgomery. A new hotel has now been built in the foreground.

The US Army Transportation Corps HQ was located in this unpretentious terrace, Nos. 18 and 20 Mount Charles, in the university area of Belfast.

Wilmont House is now an old people's home in the Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park (where the International Rose Trials are held each year) in the Dunmurry area of Belfast. During the war blast walls were added and at one time it was 'NIBS HQ' — possibly standing for Northern Ireland Base Service.

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The United States Army

The US Army came to Northern Ireland in two distinct waves — the first in 1942 and the second in 1943. Pfc. Henke had arrived with Force Magnet I drawn mainly from the 34th Infantry Division (Mechanised) and this convoy was followed by three more arriving on March 3, May 12 and May 18 respectively. The deployment in Northern Ireland consisted of V Army Corps based at Brownlow House, Lurgan, the 34th 'Red Bull' Infantry Division with its headquarters first at Ballymena and later at Omagh and the 1st Armored Division, the 'Old Ironsides', with its HQ at Castlewellan. The 32nd, 37th, and 45th Divisions were originally to have been sent to Northern Ireland but due to the ferocity of operations in the Pacific theatre they were diverted there.

The highlight of the training undertaken in Northern Ireland was Exercise Atlantic held during ten days of July 1942. On this exercise the 1st Armored Division, 59th (British) Division and 72nd (British) Brigade under command of V Corps opposed the 34th Division and 61st (British) Division under the command of the GOC British Troops in Northern Ireland.

As the US troops were the first to come to Europe, and were responsible for the ground defence of Northern Ireland, they received many distinguished visitors. On June 25, 1942, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were accompanied on a tour of the US bases by the United States ambassador John G. Winant, and General Eisenhower later wrote to General George C. Marshall that the ambassador reported that 'the King and Queen were tremendously impressed by what they saw, particularly the appearance of men, messes, quarters and so on'. Eisenhower himself paid a visit with Generals Clark, Lee and Spaatz for a conference with General Hartle and General Boresteel (Commander US Forces Iceland). Later he wrote to General Hartle stating: 'On my recent visit to Ireland, I was more than pleased with the standards attained there'.

By September Eisenhower wished to relinquish the role of ground defence of Northern Ireland and take over the air defence

October 16, 1942, Cookstown, County Tyrone. The 2nd Battalion of the 28th Quartermaster Regiment march down what is reputed to be the widest street in the whole of Ireland. Quartermaster units consisted predominantly of black troops with white officers. Today this section of the main street, which is the shopping centre of Cookstown, is part of a Control Zone which means that it is not open as a thoroughfare but access for motors is possible through one vehicle checkpoint. The comparison picture *above* indicates why such security measures are necessary — the gap was caused by terrorist bombing. The bank alongside is now closed due to a merger.

From June 24-26, 1942, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth visited Northern Ireland. Under a headline in the Belfast Telegraph proclaiming: 'King eats Cherry Pie with 100 Doughboys in Ulster,' the report went on to say that the Royal party stayed at Hillsborough. They arrived on the cruiser HMS Phoebe in Belfast Harbour, visited the aircraft factory and Harland & Wolff Ltd., and then went to lunch at Stormont (seat of government in Northern Ireland) where the guard of honour from the Massey Avenue gate was provided by American soldiers stationed in the province (photo *above* and *bottom*). (Note the white-painted stones for the blackout.) On Thursday, 25th, they went on a field day and the biggest military spectacle ever seen in Northern Ireland was mounted for the Royal visitors, which included a charge past of light and medium tanks. The newspaper article also said that, 'Both the King and Queen volunteered to go for a ride in a ''peep'', the famous American combat car which goes anywhere and does everything. Two peeps were brought up and Her Majesty stepped into one. The King was about to follow but General Hartle was too quick for him and with a polite ''Allow me, please'' stepped into the tiny vehicle after her leaving the Sovereign to travel in solitary state for once — which he did with the utmost good humour.' (photo *right*)

Both these pictures were also inserted in the Belfast Telegraph by Ian Henderson to get more information on the Royal visit. After a few false starts, the jeep picture was identified by the head of the Milk Marketing Board in Northern Ireland who happened to be present as a boy. The First Armored Division did a full scale attack in the valley between Slieve Croob and Drumkeeragh Forest Park in County Down and it was known by those present that this was practice for the North African landings. The precise site where the photo of Queen Elizabeth was taken proved difficult to identify. Not so with the Stormont picture. An editorial accompanying this in the Telegraph could not help commenting on the political irony of it: 'Feelings on Ulster may be running high in the USA these times . . . wonder, would the Yanks form a Royal guard of honour at Stormont today?'

Above: Fintona is a small market town in the west of County Tyrone. Here members of the motor pool of the Headquarters Company of the 135th Infantry wash their vehicles with stirrup pumps in a river called the Quiggery Water — November 5, 1942.

Below: The passage of nearly forty years has seen considerable change. The Nissen huts have been replaced by a cattle market. The Royal Ulster Constabulary police station, now surrounded by a security fence, lies in the background.

Left: **V Corps headquarters was located in Brownlow House, Lurgan — a town twenty miles south-west of Belfast now part of the new city of Craigavon. This picture shows the 56th Signal Battalion — part of the second convoy of V Corps troops moving to England eventually destined for North Africa. Note the queer concrete structures on the corner, long since removed** *(above).*

On December 9, 1941, immediately following Pearl Harbor, the Special Army Observer Group which had been acting as an American military mission in London since May that year, consulted the War Office with a view to securing burial grounds for American forces in the United Kingdom. By January 9, 1942, two plots had already been set aside for emergency burials in Northern Ireland — one in Londonderry, the other in Belfast. *Above:* **Thus it was in a small one-sixth-acre plot in Belfast City Cemetery that the first American to die in Northern Ireland, Corporal Earle E. Perkins, was laid to rest on March 12, 1942. The limited size of this plot led to the acquisition of a 10½-acre tract at Lisnabreeny, three miles outside Belfast, which was officially opened on December 2, 1943 (see page 28).** *Below:* **All remains were exhumed after the war, either for repatriation to family graves in the USA or for concentration in the permanent war cemetery at Cambridge. Today the cemetery, located in West Belfast, lies in an area where many disturbances take place and readers wishing to pay it a visit should make local enquiries before going there.**

as his troops were on the move to the battle-front. Between September and October 1942 the fighting men departed for Operation TORCH — the liberation of North Africa.

Until October 1943 only an administrative element of the US Army remained in Northern Ireland preparing for the arrival of the second wave of troops. On October 18, 1943 the 2nd US Infantry Division, under the command of Major General Walter M. Robertson, with their proud claim to be 'Second to None', arrived in Belfast Lough and they too were welcomed by the Governor and the Prime Minister. Later in the month saw the arrival of the 'Red Diamonds' — the 5th Infantry division — commanded by Major General Leroy S. Irwin, while in early December the 82nd Airborne Division, fresh from battle in Italy, arrived under the Command of Major General Matthew B. Ridgway. (This division, originally an infantry unit which had been redesignated an airborne division on August 15, 1942, excluded the 504th Parachute Regiment which were left at Anzio.) Just before Christmas XV Corps HQ arrived, under command of Major General Wade H. Heslip, while the final disposition was Major General William C. McMahon's 8th Infantry Division. The three infantry regiments of the latter unit are among the US Army's best known, the 13th having been formed in 1798, the 121st fighting in the Civil War and the 28th being the first American combat unit ever to set foot in France when, while serving with the 1st Infantry Division, it landed at St. Nazaire in June 1917. Originally the 8th Infantry Division had the nickname of the 'Pathfinders' but was later known as the Golden Arrow Division.

The 5th Infantry Division were based in south-east Down with their headquarters at Newcastle while the 2nd Infantry Division moved into the Armagh/Newry area with an HQ at Armagh. The airborne troops had their HQ at Castledawson and were quartered in the Cookstown/Castledawson area, while Fermanagh and South Tyrone played host to the 8th Infantry Division, HQ being at Omagh. XV Corps, like V Corps a year earlier, was based at Brownlow House, Lurgan, and by February 1944 there were 100,000 American soldiers in Northern Ireland.

Within a few months of their arrival some troops were already on the move and by June all were gone — gone to take part in the massive operation to liberate Europe. The 'All-American' 82nd Airborne Division (from Cookstown/Castledawson) dropped behind enemy lines in Normandy in the early hours of D-Day itself while the 2nd Infantry Division

Above: **By November 11, 1942, those GIs of Company C, 133rd Infantry (part of the 34th Division like the 135th at Fintona) had received their new-style helmets. The 60mm mortar section is pictured during a battle practice near Tynan Abbey. Tynan is located on the Armagh-Monaghan border with Eire and in 1980 the owner of the abbey and his son were murdered by the IRA. Since then the grounds have been totally closed and it was not possible to gain access. The pictures *below* show the main entrance gate and one area where the old Nissen huts of the American camp were constructed. The wartime film 'A Letter from Ulster' is actually based in the grounds of Tynan Abbey and one scene shows GIs borrowing a piano from the Stronge family.**

A 'sermon on the mount' by Lieutenant General George S. Patton for these GIs of the 10th Infantry Regiment on March 30, 1944 after exercising in the Mourne Mountains behind Kilkeel, County Down. Ian believes the picture was taken close to the Silent Valley Reservoir although the barren terrain *(below)* makes a pinpoint comparison a difficult undertaking. However, perhaps an enthusiastic reader trekking the area will identify the precise rock in front of Patton!

Somewhat easier to match were other pictures taken on the same inspection trip of Third Army troops. Armagh is the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland, being St. Patrick's major town. *Above:* **GIs of the 2nd Division paraded in front of the County Museum on the Mall.** *Below:* **Later General Patton, accompanied by Major General Walter M. Robertson, CG of the 2nd, drove past troops drawn up on the cricket square in a 'peep'. All these pictures were only released in August 1947. Incidentally, the film 'A Letter from Ulster' makes a particular point of explaining the difference between a peep and a jeep. An American officer is seen telling a British soldier that a peep is a small vehicle used only for carrying personnel whereas a jeep is used for towing a weapon.**

(the 'Indian Head' men from Armagh/Newry) came ashore on D+1 on Omaha Beach. The 8th Division and the 5th Division joined the fray on D+28 and D+34 respectively, the 'Red Diamond' Division changing their sobriquet to the more aggressive nick-name of 'Red Devils' in August 1944.

This second wave of US troops also had their quota of distinguished visitors while in Northern Ireland. On November 10/11, 1942, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt paid a visit which included a look in at the American Red Cross Centre — formerly the Plaza Ballroom, Belfast. Prior to Operation OVERLORD, the Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, returned to Northern Ireland for a three-day visit to inspect the men who were soon to face the most crucial battle of all.

On May 17 he flew into Greencastle airfield and was met by General Irwin. There he viewed the 10th Infantry Regiment and divisional artillery who were drawn up on the aerodrome. Moving up to Newcastle he inspected the Amphibious School and troops of the 28th Infantry Field Artillery Battalion and the Divisional Engineer Battalion. At Dundrum he viewed a battalion in attack, supported by a platoon of tanks, and finally at Ballykinler he saw small unit training. Inspections completed, he drove to XV Corps HQ at Brownlow House, Lurgan, for a dinner party attended by Generals Irwin and McMahon and the GOC Northern Ireland.

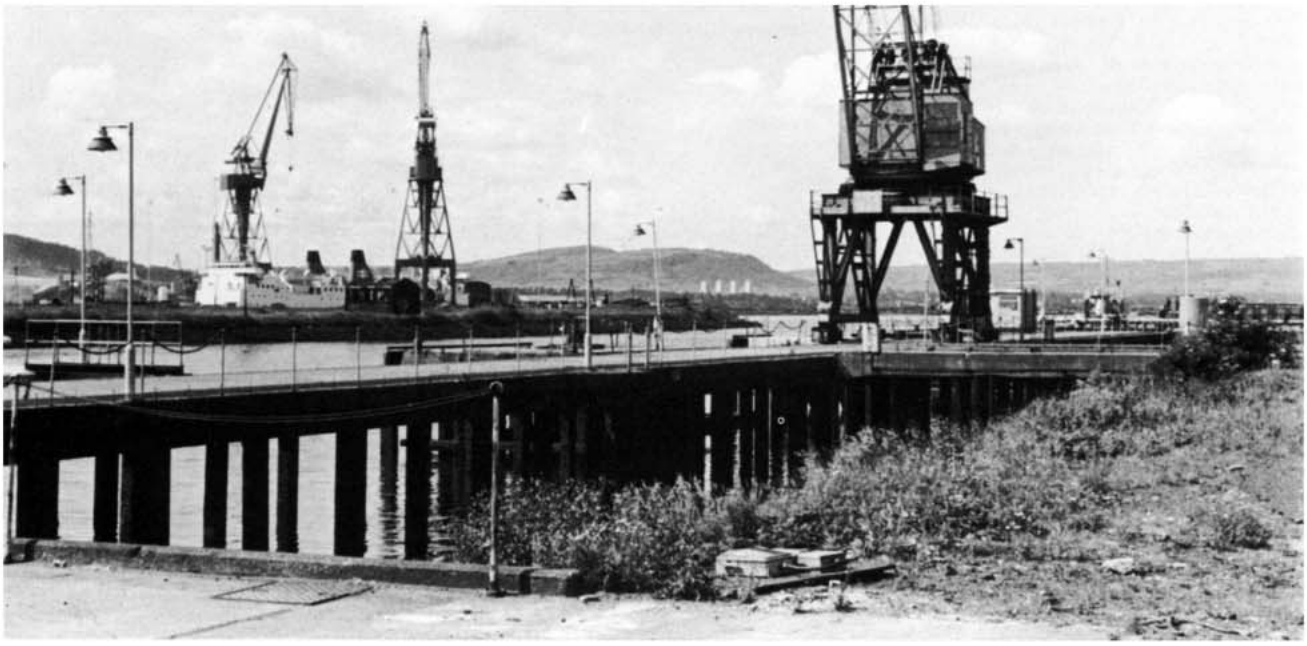
Next day he travelled west with General McMahon to inspect the 8th Infantry Division at Florencecourt, Carrickawick and Gortin. He formally reviewed the 28th Infantry Regiment on Portora Royal School playing fields and lunch was taken in the 8th Infantry Division Club in Enniskillen. The disposition of the 8th Infantry Division at the time was as follows: HQ at Omagh; 13th Infantry Regiment at Ely Lodge; 28th Infantry Regiment at Drumcose; 121st Infantry Regiment at Fintona (later at Ballynorthland, Dungannon) and the remainder at Ashbrooke/Colebrooke. On May 19, General Eisenhower travelled to Bangor to inspect the US Navy (detailed later).

The United States Army Air Force

Above: **An inauspicious beginning for the USAAF in Northern Ireland. This picture, released in May 1945 but taken in August 1943, shows the oil tanker G. Harrison Smith unloading P-47 Thunderbolts at what was then known as 'ammunition wharf' at Belfast docks. This was located beside Shorts works where they were fitted out.** *Below:* **Note the new Sealink ferry being completed in the Harland & Wolff shipyard in the background.**

On relinquishing the responsibility for the ground defence of Northern Ireland, American forces planned to take over the air defence of the province. At that time this task was in the hands of No. 82 Group Fighter Command of the Royal Air Force. The USAAF set up a scheme for 'Shadow 82' from the 2nd Pursuit Group, USAAF, with the aim of understudying the RAF and then relieving them at the three fighter stations: Ballyhalbert, Eglinton and Kirkistown. Nos. 2, 4 and 5 Squadrons of the 52nd Pursuit Group arrived at Eglinton on July 13, 1942 for Spitfire training and later the 82nd Pursuit Group in the form of Nos. 95 and 96 Squadrons joined them, and No. 97 Squadron arrived at Maydown. However, the demands of the Pacific and North African theatres were too pressing to spare the fighter aircraft and their pilots and in October it was decided that the air defence role should remain the responsibility of the RAF.

On September 12, 1942, the HQ of the Eighth USAAF Composite Command disembarked in Belfast and immediately moved to Long Kesh as Northern Ireland was to be used as a training ground and initial assembly area for the USAAF. Shortly afterwards the headquarters transferred to Kircassock House, Lurgan. Aerodrome construction had continued relentlessly since 1940 and the entry of the USA into the war had accelerated it. There were two main themes for the USAAF: 1) the construction of training airfields and 2) the 'Y' Scheme — the construction of an aircraft repair base at Langford Lodge — a project initially costed at £1¼ million. This base was to house 2,600 civilian employees of the Lockheed Overseas Corporation and was to be the major USAAF repair base in Europe. (Immediately next to it on Lough Neagh, Ram's Island was a US Navy flying boat base.) Langford Lodge was built in record time and went into service on August 5, 1942 as 'Headquarters Langford Air Depot'. It was the contribution of this base which ensured that the bombardment of Europe from the forward airfields in East Anglia could continue without let-up.

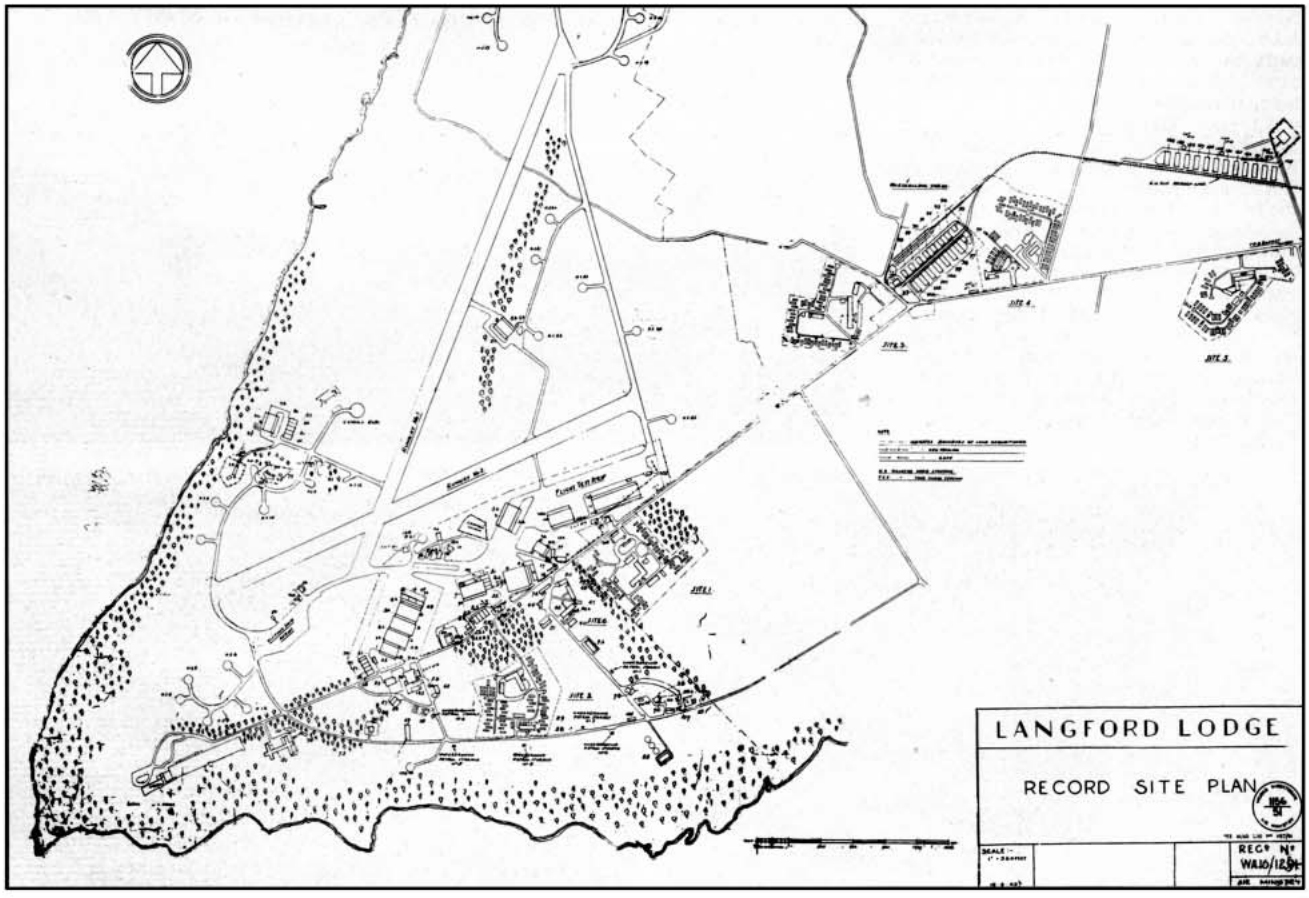


The order of usage of aerodromes by the USAAF was: Long Kesh, Langford Lodge, Toome, Greencastle, Cluntoe, Maghaberry and finally Mullaghmore. Allocated but never used were: St. Angelo, Maydown (briefly), Nutt's Corner and Bishopscourt. Additionally, fighter aircraft were landed in parts by sea at Belfast Harbour, partially assembled at Sydenham and then flown or towed to Langford Lodge.

Toome, Greencastle, Cluntoe and Mullagghmore were 'Combat Crew Replacement Centers' (CCRC) where new crews met together and trained together for the first time before moving on to operational squadrons in England. Greencastle, for example, had hardstandings for 100 aircraft — some still remain as Cranfield Caravan Park. In June 1944 there were 2,000 airmen based at Toome and 1,200 at Maghaberry. All told there were over 20,000 USAAF personnel in the province at the pre D-Day peak. Machine gun practice was carried out near Dundrum Bay, bombing practice at Ballymartin and air-to-air firing off Cushendall.

Above: **Headquarters for the Eighth USAAF Composite Command were located in Kircassock House, south-east of Lurgan near the village of Maralin, after a brief initial period at Long Kesh aerodrome.** *Below:* **Unfortunately the house was demolished shortly after the war and the estate is now owned by a commercial farming company. However the gatehouse** *(bottom left)* **does still stand and inscriptions** *(bottom right)* **can still be seen engraved in its brickwork, one reading: 'Fifteen years now a buck ass private'.**

Station 597 Langford Lodge on the eastern shore of Lough Neagh was one of two main Eighth Air Force air depots set up for carrying out major repairs and overhauls. Other units located on the base included No. 22 Veterinary Section: Nos. 897 and 1145 Military Police Companies; No. 401 Signal Company and No. 402 Station Gas Defence Detachment. As shown in these photos taken in April 1944, aircraft were unmarked at this stage, being flight tested before distribution to forward squadrons in England.



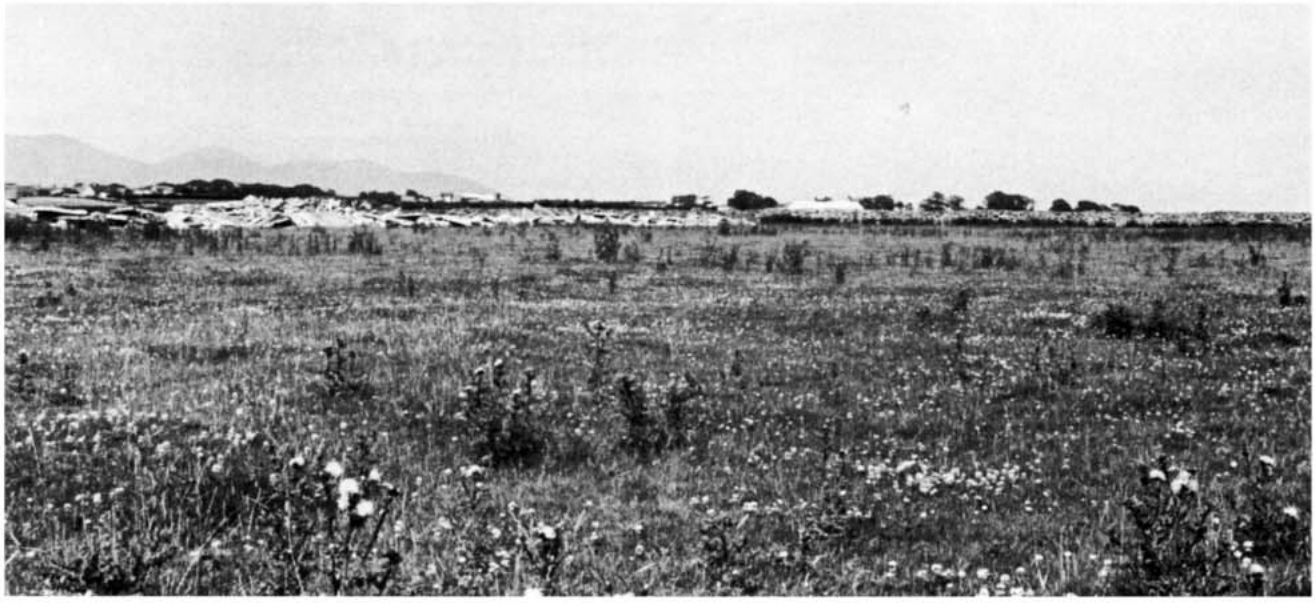
The aerodrome is still largely intact today, owned by the Martin Baker Company, but access is denied to all, even those wishing to see the old theatre where Glenn Miller played two concerts in August 1944. *Below:* Luckily the photographs were taken on the flight test strip which can be seen from the perimeter fence enabling a rough comparison to be taken.

As with the army, the rundown commenced before D-Day and on August 7 Langford Lodge gave up its Eighth Air Force role. Most of the other stations were handed back to the RAF over the next few months until, finally, Greencastle was returned on May 31, 1945. A press statement at the time read: 'The 350-acre base at Greencastle, the runways of which have enough concrete in them to lay a 9ft roadway from Belfast to Londonderry, was a vital link in the United States' constant flow of bomber crew replacements. I was often at the station when it was a throbbing hive of activity. To its broad acres overlooking the Irish Sea, trained aircrew men came from the States. At Greencastle the bombers were crewed up — skilled individualists became members of a team — and replacements for lost crews operating from British bases were flown over every day'.

The headquarters' buildings of No. 3 Combat Crew Replacement Center at Toome on the north shore of Lough Neagh. Some of the buildings still remain in a derelict state, the control tower has been converted into a private house and a new road has been built utilising part of the perimeter track. The bridge in the October 1943 photo now lies on a very minor road with a picnic area on the left.

Above left: Construction work taking place at one of the extensions to Greencastle aerodrome near Kilkeel in February 1944. *Above right:* Ian Henderson determined that this shot had been taken not far from the Cranfield Caravan Park which itself is laid out on one of the old dispersals built some distance from the airfield itself which lies over the hill beyond the farmhouse.

Above: Trust General Patton to muscle in on the air force. A characteristic picture of the flamboyant CG of the Third Army addressing his men lined up on Greencastle aerodrome. The date is March 30, 1944 — it was to be three months before his men were in action in France. *Below:* Only a short stretch of broken up runway remains — the airfield having been returned to agriculture.



The United States Navy

The anniversary parade of the commissioning of the Springtown Naval Operation Base at Londonderry held on February 5, 1943. Captain Donald Kennedy reports on behalf of the US Marines.

Although Private Henke was the first US serviceman officially to land in Northern Ireland, there had of course been many hundreds of what would in the idiom of the 1980's be described as 'advisers' in the province for up to a year beforehand — mainly dressed as civilians, building the port facilities at Londonderry and the Air Depot at Langford Lodge.

Long before the USA officially entered the war it was a serviceman of the US Navy who was the first American to go into combat while based in Northern Ireland. He was Ensign Leonard 'Tuck' Smith who, along with eight colleagues, had been posted to RAF Lough Erne in County Fermanagh to assist the RAF in learning to fly their lend-lease Catalina aircraft. Smith became the co-pilot of Catalina Z of No. 209 Squadron, and on May 26, 1941, this flying boat took off in the small

The site of the former base is now occupied by an industrial estate and playing fields.

Above: What every well dressed MP was wearing in February 1944. A fearsome SP2/C David Credson of the Navy with Pfc Henry Bitzes of the Army and Pfc Herbert Pickins of the Marines. *Right:* The picture was taken on the Diamond in Londonderry.

Above left: **The US Naval Hospital at Creevagh (pictured here on February 23, 1943) was the destination of many of the crews rescued in the Atlantic from convoy sinkings. To find the site of the hospital today one leaves Londonderry on the Letterkenny Road (B193) and actually passes through the army and customs checkpoint on the border. The camp site lies between it and the Eire customs post which is just over the hill in the 1942 photograph. The bases of the Nissen huts remain as does the overgrown old road** *(above right).* **An exact comparison is not possible today because of new trees on the right.**

hours from Lough Erne to search for the elusive *Bismarck*. At 10.15 a.m. with Ensign Smith, USN, at the controls, the ship was sighted and he took violent evasive action to avoid the hostile barrage with which the *Bismarck* greeted them. This sighting was vital in the final hunt for the German ship. In the press and radio interviews that followed with the Catalina's crew, only the pilot Flying Officer Dennis Briggs got a mention and the co-pilot who was actually at the controls had to remain anonymous.

The build-up of the US Navy base at Londonderry has been described earlier and it formally became the US Naval Operating Base, Londonderry, on February 5, 1942. Londonderry was also the main US communications base in Europe during the war and after. It was also the largest convoy escort base in the United Kingdom and in April 1943 it supported 149 ocean-going warships (American, British and Canadian) compared with sixty at Liverpool and fifteen at Greenock.

The port had also a vital part to play as a repair depot and hospital base. In a fifteen-month period 1,900 survivors of U-boat attacks on merchant ships were landed at Londonderry and it was a popular welcoming port for seamen of many nationalities. A Canadian of the Newfoundland Escort Force wrote: 'Mid-ocean groups began the famous

The US Navy maintained its communications base *(above)* **at Clooney Park, Londonderry, until the mid 1970s. Although the blast walls and earthen banks were subsequently removed, the same building still remains to be seen behind the locked gates on the left of the complex now used by the Department of the Environment** *(below).* **One interesting relic, although of post-war origin, is a sign at the gate warning visitors that they are liable to a search 'while aboard the station'. The site can be seen on the outskirts of the city near the Altnagelvin Hospital.**

'Newfie-to-Derry' run on which they were to continue for four years, with the smile of the green Foyle rather than the scowling crags of Iceland greeting them at the end of the voyage'.

By 1944, however, the emphasis shifted down to Belfast Lough and Bangor Bay. The greatest armada ever seen in Irish waters had begun to assemble. This was part of Task Force 129 destined to soften up the Normandy defences on D-Day. It commenced assembly in April and a month later was complete. There were two Bombardment Forces:

Force A — the battleship USS *Nevada*, the heavy cruiser USS *Tuscaloosa* (flying the flag of Rear Admiral Morton Le Deyo), USS *Quincy*, DS *Soemba*, HMS *Erebus*, HMS *Enterprise*, HMS *Hawkins* and HMS *Black Prince* (built in Belfast by Harland & Wolff).

Force C — the battleship USS *Texas* (flying the flag of Rear Admiral Carlton F. Bryant), USS *Arkansas*, FS *Montcalm*, FS *George Leygues*.

In addition, there were twenty US Navy destroyers and 100 smaller vessels.

On May 19 the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, completed his Northern Ireland tour by visiting the task force in Bangor Bay. He set out from Bangor Pier and went on board the *Texas*, the *Quincy*, the *Tuscaloosa* and the *Baldwin* accompanied by Rear Admirals Bryant and Le Deyo. They circled the *Arkansas* and the *Nevada* in the Admiral's barge and completed the tour with lunch on the *Tuscaloosa*. Just over two weeks later the armada slipped quietly away from Bangor to play its part in history.

General Eisenhower on a pre-D-Day inspection tour aboard the USS Quincy, (a Baltimore Class heavy cruiser completed in December 1943) lying off Belfast Lough in Bangor Bay (Eisenhower Library).

The American Red Cross Club in Belfast was situated in the Plaza Ballroom on Chichester Street. At the dance held on October 10, 1942 the 'Ambassadors of Swing' provide the music. The Plaza remained a popular dancing spot until demolished in 1980.

The Social Life

It was impossible for 120,000 American servicemen not to make an impact on everyday life in Northern Ireland, or for Ulster not to make an impression on the servicemen. The reactions on both sides were generally favourable although the exceptionally wet winter of 1943 did not impress the GIs. A cartoon in *Stars & Stripes* dated 1944 read: 'Patrick O'Shamrock of Ballybaloney distinctly remembers a day without rain, recorded in 1898'.

November 5, 1942 was a memorable sporting occasion at Ravenhill Rugby Ground when the first American football game in Northern Ireland was played before 8,000 fans who saw 'Hale' beat 'Yarvard'. The following day a local headline read: '8,000 Irish fans puzzled by US Football Game'. The GIs found Northern Ireland to be rather dull on the whole and noted that the 'movies' shown were generally well out-of-date. The pace of life was also too slow — the following comment summing up the GIs feelings: 'Gee, Rostrevor's a swell little place but why the hell don't they bury their dead?'

The 5th Infantry Division Red Cross Club at Warrenpoint, close by the border with Eire, still stands. It was located in what is now an architects/builders office. The picture *(left)* shows Private Romaine E. Wallace putting the finishing touches to his wall mural on the top floor.

Romance, however, did blossom quite often, sometimes for a short period and sometimes more permanently. The oustanding hit in the USA in June 1942 was *Johnny Doughboy found a Rose in Ireland*. A song composed by the GIs here and arranged by the 'Ambassadors of Swing' went as follows:

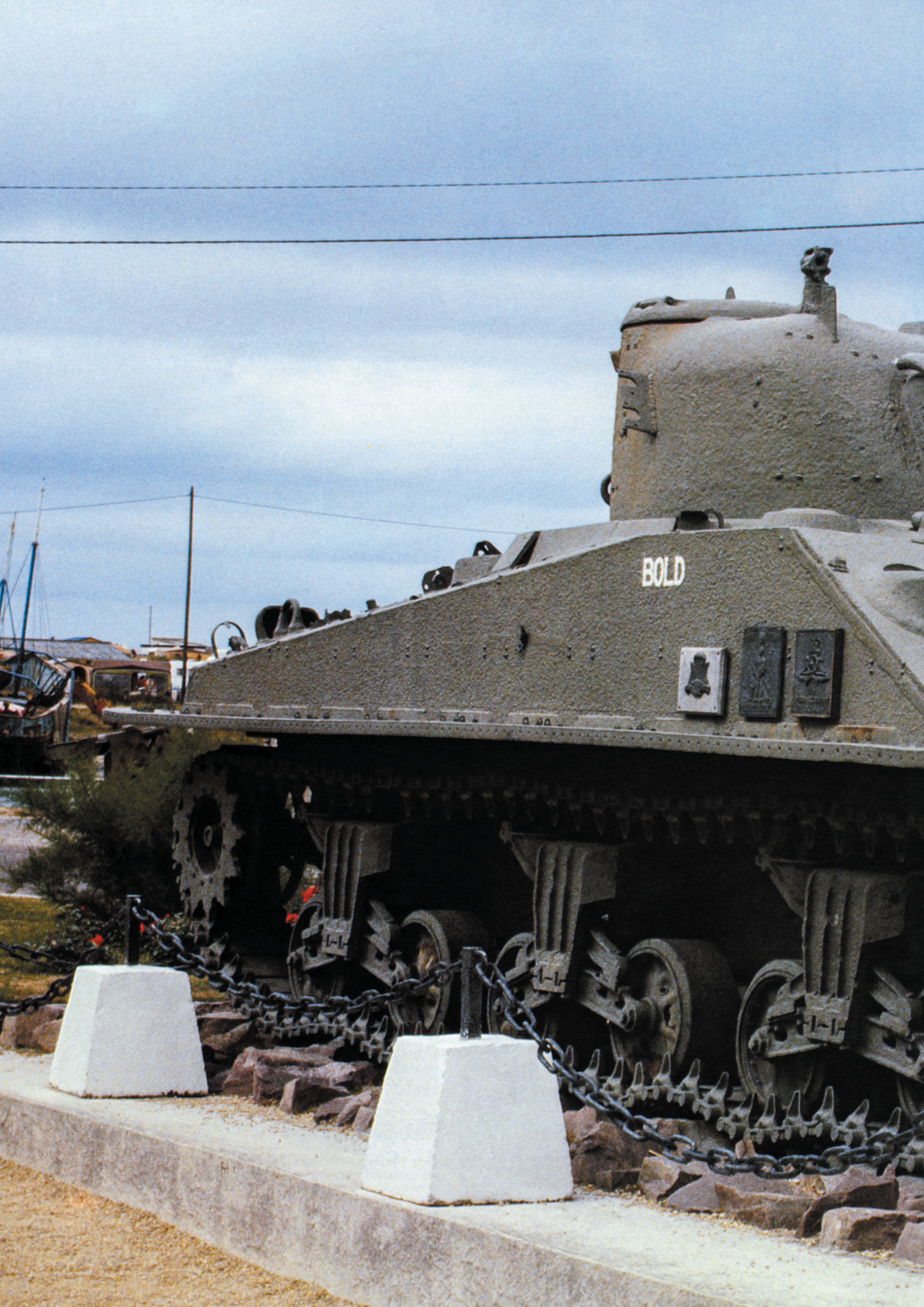
We're the Yanks in Ireland,
And we're glad to be here too,
It's a long, long way from home,
But we're not the type to groan,
'Cause the Irish are all swell,
And we're happy as well,
We're the Yanks in Ireland.

To keep the American public at ease about their boys in Northern Ireland, the Crown Film Unit produced a 35-minute documentary called *A Letter from Ulster*. It was released in the USA in November 1942 and in London in January 1944.

Most GIs had a relatively short stay and most memories seem to be of a pleasant interlude in a green land before embarking into the burning heat of the North African beaches, the hell of the Normandy cauldron, or the nightmare of bombing runs to the Ruhr.

Left: **The reception line at the first American officers' dance, given by staff officers of the 34th Division, on Army Day, April 6, 1942.** *Above:* **The same gymnasium at the Depot of the King's Division, Royal Irish Rangers, at Ballymena, County Antrim, nearly forty years later.**

Left: **Sunday, February 6, 1944 and men of the 5th Division join the congregation of the Presbyterian church at Castlewellan, County Down.** *Above:* **On visiting the church in 1981, Ian found that the service had actually been held in the church hall.**


BOLD

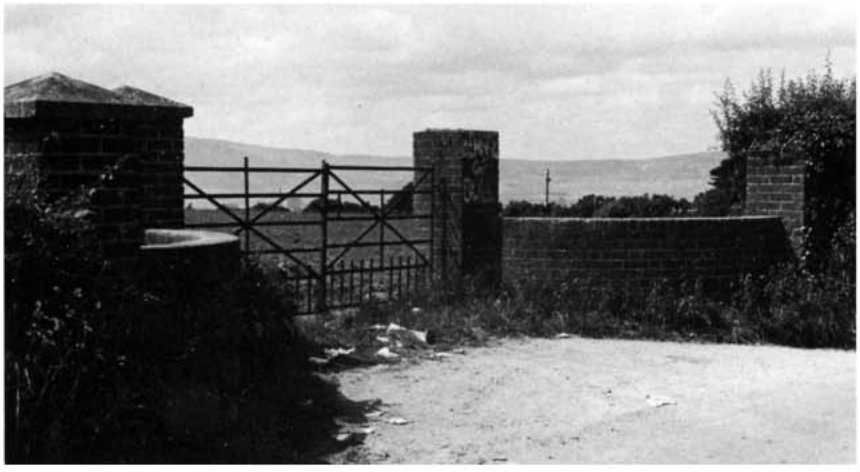
What now remains?

The new cemetery at Lisnabreeny was opened in December 1943 and eventually contained 142 burials. The ceremony pictured *above* was photographed on May 6, 1944 and this picture released the same month after the censor had deleted grave identifications. (It is still American policy today that individual graves should not be identifiable in published photographs.) After the remains were exhumed in 1948, the cemetery was abandoned and has now been returned to pasture *(below)*.

In summary, very little is left to mark the fact that for three years or more 120,000 US servicemen were at any one time in the province. The port of Londonderry has some of the original wartime facilities left but the US Navy Communications Base finally closed just a few years ago.

In Fermanagh, the concrete bases of the camp at Ely Lodge are still there and the remains of Quonset or Nissen huts are often all that is left to be seen elsewhere in the province. On the air force side, all the aerodromes, save Langford Lodge, are now closed — the latter being now privately owned by the Martin Baker Company and not open to the public — although many of the living areas still remain in surrounding fields. One could never guess that Greencastle was a major airfield from what remains today and much the same is true of Toome. Cluntoe and Mullaghmore have runways remaining while Maghaberry and Long Kesh now have prisons built on them. Only the ex-GI will be able to work out for himself where his own accommodation or base actually was because there is no formal system of marking these past sites.

However, until very recently one gem still remained in an old mess hall — now a cowbyre — at Langford Lodge where the walls were gloriously decorated with the aviation artwork made famous by the Eighth Air Force. Its location was not publicised for fear of vandalism, but nevertheless we have learned with regret that the walls on which the paintings were made were knocked down a short time after photographing them for this article. Now the little stone column outside Belfast City Hall is virtually the only reminder of a period almost forgotten and if it was not for this then you would scarcely know that the Yanks had been here at all.



Only the dilapidated gateway with its warning to beware of the bull remains today to mark the spot.

On January 26, 1943 a monument was unveiled by the Duke of Abercorn, Governor of Northern Ireland, outside the City Hall in Donegall Square, Belfast, to mark the landing of first US troops in Northern Ireland and, indeed, the first officially in Europe. *Below:* A sunny day in Belfast in 1981 and passers by gather to hear the lunchtime concert to be given by the RUC band.

These ladies of Langford Lodge, still as young as they were forty years ago, finally met their match during demolitions in 1981 (E. Cromie).

Northern Ireland Tour

A visitor to Northern Ireland in search of relics of the GIs will not have much satisfaction if he is looking for souvenirs or the bric-a-brac of World War II. Of the US servicemen who went to Northern Ireland as their first overseas posting, almost all left the province in an orderly manner, taking with them all their kit as they headed for the battlefields or skies of Europe and North Africa.

The visitor will, however, be able to see almost all the sites shown in this article, and at the same time see one of the most beautiful corners of the British Isles. Contrary to popular belief, Northern Ireland currently greets nearly three-quarters of a million visitors each year, many from all parts of the world, and all of whom are assured of a warm welcome.

This article covers almost all the locations used in Northern Ireland by the American Forces. Thus it stretches to almost every corner of the province and to visit all these places would take at least a full week. Although the main towns are well served by public transport, many sites are located in the country or some distance from town centres. A visitor is therefore advised to bring his own car or hire one. The roads are excellent, uncrowded, and well signposted, and no part of Northern Ireland is more than a day's drive from another. It may therefore be helpful to give a few hints for the visitor interested in the places used by the Americans during their stay.

Do look out for 'Control Zone' notices where cars may not be left unattended.

Do ask permission before entering private property — most wartime camps have returned to private use.

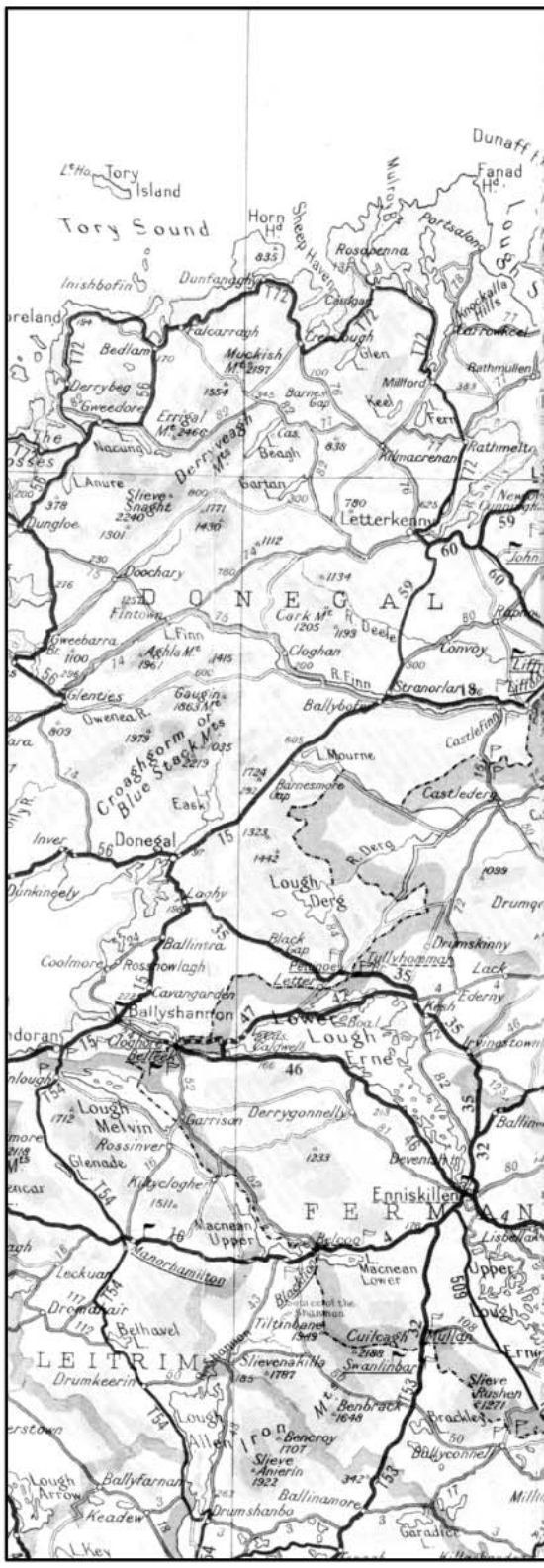
Do ask for advice in a local Tourist Information Centre before going sightseeing in the well-known 'riot' areas.

Don't expect to gain admittance to a military barracks, airfield or harbour area by turning up at the gate. You may be admitted if you write in advance, depending on security restrictions.

Do talk to the locals and ask the older ones about their memories of the GIs — they'll talk for hours.

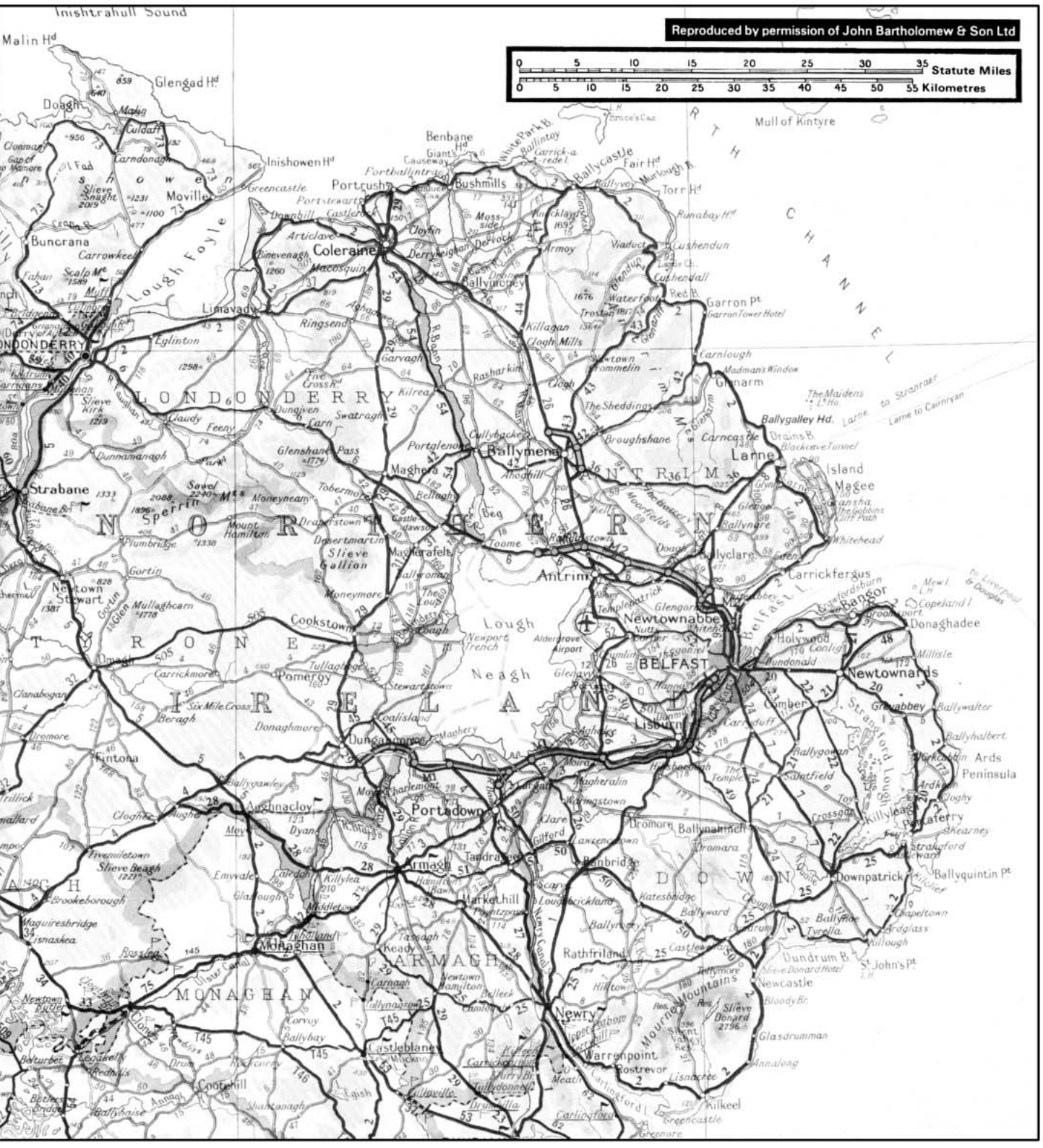
The comparison pictures have been taken all over Northern Ireland as a glance at the map shows. They can be divided into three broad groups: (a) Belfast, (b) south and east of the province and (c) north and west of the province.

Top: **The section of Pollock Docks, Belfast, used by the US Army Transportation Corps, photographed on May 15, 1943.** *Above:* **The wartime picture proved to have been taken from the top of a grain silo — now unused and unsafe to ascend. This is the view from its base looking towards the sea.**



Belfast

The stone commemorating the landing of the first American troops in Belfast in June 1942 is really the centre point of Belfast, standing as it does in front of the fine City Hall, overlooking Donegall Square and Donegall Place. Anyone wishing to pass through Belfast quickly may still take a quick look at this stone in the shopping centre of the city. Just a short walk past the City Hall on Chichester Street is the building site where the



American Red Cross Club stood. It was known to generations of Belfast people as the Plaza Ballroom but now it is due to become the site of another office block.

The docks area of the city is not generally accessible to the casual visitor but by writing in advance to the Belfast Harbour Commissioners it may be possible to arrange a visit. Much of the wartime dock area remains as it was, although a great deal is currently being redeveloped.

To find the old American Military Cemetery, travel out of Belfast on the Castlereagh Road to the roundabout at the Knock dual carriageway. Turn right onto it and continue for less than half-a-mile before taking a left turn onto a small but exceedingly steep road, aptly called the Rocky Road. After less than a mile this road meets a T-junction. At this point the field immediately to the right is that of the old cemetery. It is identifiable by the now-dilapidated wall and gates some seventy-five yards before the junction.

Wilmont House, the old NIBS Headquarters, is set in the beautiful Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park, scene of the Belfast International Rose Trials. To approach it, leave Belfast by University Road, Malone Road and Upper Malone Rod. The Park is entered to the right off Upper Malone Road just after the Dunmurry Lane turn off. The house itself is now an old people's home.

Some miles outside Belfast on the coast road to Larne is the historic town of Carrickfergus. Sunnylands Camp, built in WWI, no longer exists but a housing estate still bears the name. A visit to Carrickfergus is well worthwhile, however, to visit the Irish Cavalry Regiments' Museum in the castle built in 1180. Ironically, Carrickfergus was the scene of the last engagement between the Royal Navy and the embryo US Navy when in 1778 Paul Jones in the privateer Ranger captured HMS Drake which had sailed out of Carrickfergus to challenge him.

South-East Tour

A graphic illustration of the age-old phrase 'from swords into ploughshares'. *Above:* In March 1944, the little village of Clough was alive with the sounds of the 5th Quartermaster Company but by 1981 *(below)* transformation to a farm was complete.

A good Ordnance Survey Map is needed for anyone wishing to visit the more obscure rural sites where the Americans were based.

Travel out of Belfast to Ballynahinch and thence to The Spa and Drumkeeragh Forest Park. Close by is Slieve Croob where the King and Queen visited the 1st Armored Division and watched them practise an attack. Just a few miles away is the group of villages where much of the 5th Infantry Division was based. Seaforde, Clough and Mount Panther are all on the A24/A2 (the A24 becomes the A2 at Clough). Seaforde House is open to the public only on certain days of the year but a nursery is open all year round.

Continue on the A2 to Newcastle, now (as then) a major holiday resort. Donard Park is found nestling in the foothills of Slieve Donard at the southern end of the promenade. This is precisely where 'the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea'. After Newcastle follow the A2 once more along the coast to the fishing port of Kilkeel. Before reaching the town boundary follow the signposts to the Silent Valley Reservoir — just to the west of it are the foothills of Slievenagore where Patton watched the 5th Infantry Division on exercise. Returning to Kilkeel follow the right turn, in the centre of the town, signposted Newry and a mile outside the town is Mourne Park, now the home of Kilkeel Golf Club. Many of the signs of a wartime camp remain including dozens of hut bases and the only wartime latrine left in Northern Ireland!

If you don't take the right turn in Kilkeel but go straight on you will find what is left of Greencastle airfield. Like many aerodromes its name was not entirely apt. The control tower may be found by turning left in the hamlet of Dunnaval and it will soon be obvious that this is the heart of the old airfield as many of the village buildings are of wartime

Seaforde House — the home of the Forde family — became the motor maintenance section for the 5th Reconnaissance Troops of the 5th Division. The courtyard is now a silage pit.

Ballywillwill lies a few miles west of Clough. At the 5th Medical Battalion camp site *(above)*, Ian Henderson found the bases of dozens of Nissen huts beside the old camp road — and the old gatehouse still standing beside a post-war cattlegrid *(below)*.

Above and right: **At Mount Panther, just half a mile from Clough, Ian found Seamus Fitzpatrick who pointed out where the 5th Division's 21st Field Artillery Battalion's camp had been located.**

Left: **The 11th Infantry Regiment's gun park was stationed at Donard Lodge in Newcastle where the Divisional HQ was situated.** *Above:* **The site is now a football pitch in Donard Park.**

Above: **The 40th Field Artillery of the 5th Division took over Mourne Park just outside Kilkeel, seen here on March 13, 1944.** *Below:* **The park has now been turned into Kilkeel Golf Club but the camp site remains as a grazing meadow. The bases of numerous huts remain, perhaps more than anywhere else in Northern Ireland, including a WWII-vintage latrine!**

The entrance to the infantry camp of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 10th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, pictured on January 24, 1944.

The camp was located just off the main road running from Kilkeel to Rostrevor at Ballyedmond. In the background is Carlingford Lough with the Republic of Ireland beyond.

Narrowwater Castle, situated at the neck of Carlingford Lough and close by the border with the Republic, has been the home of the Hall family for generations. In March 1944 it was pictured *(above)* as the billet for men of the 2nd Infantry Division, quartered both on the upper floors and in the grounds. The picture *(below)* shows an exact comparison of the castle today.

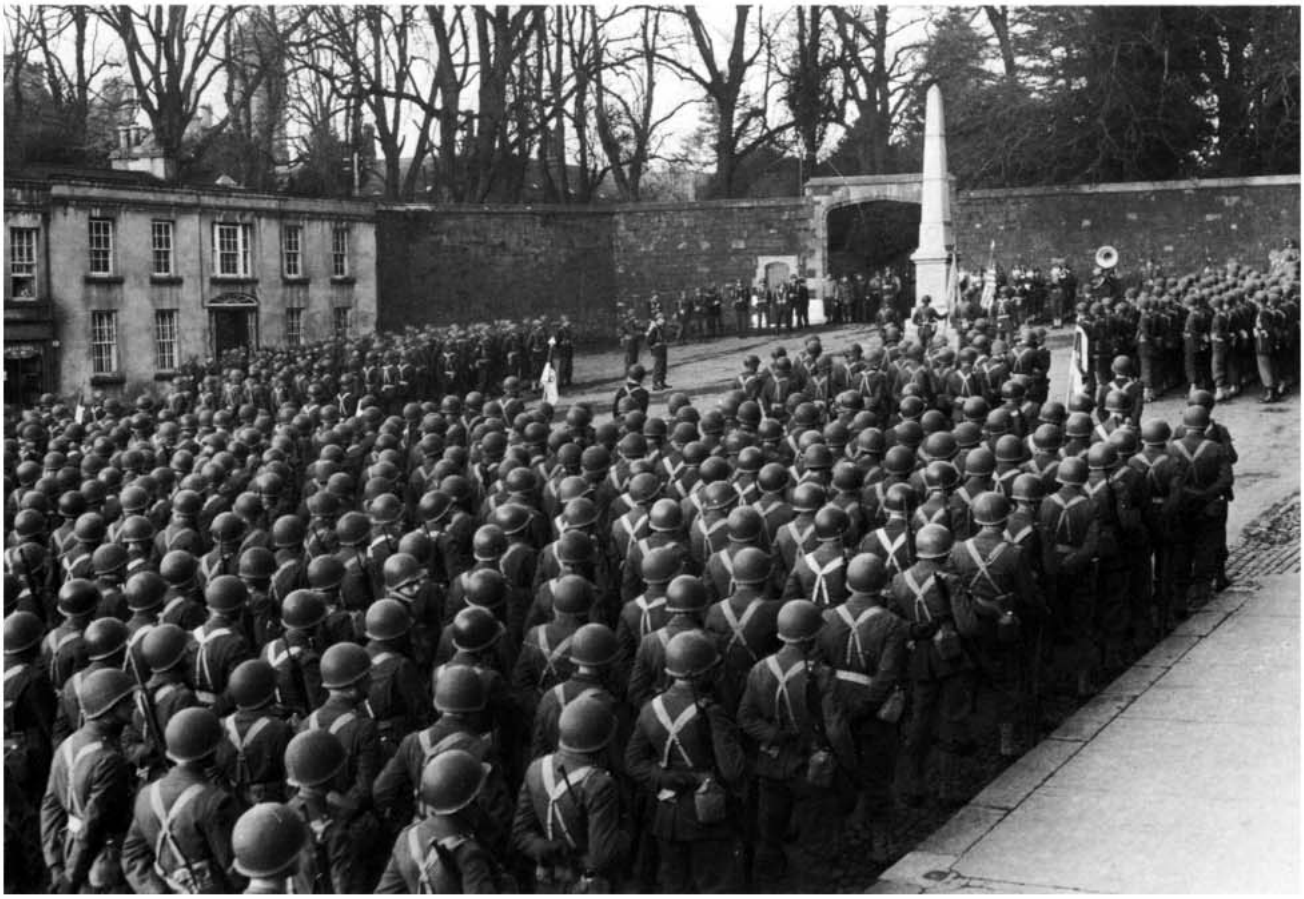
construction. Note that the traditional dry stone Mourne granite walls in the area have been superceded by dry concrete walls made from chunks of the old runways!

Leaving Greencastle, return to the A2 to Newry and after a few miles can be seen the old Ballyedmond estate on the left-hand side and the bases of numerous huts. At least two battalions were based here and after the war Ballyedmond became a Territorial Army camp for a number of years. Drive on a few miles and the village of Rostrevor is reached nestling in the foothills of the Mournes. Many of the big houses such as Green Park were used by the Americans.

A few miles further on is Warrenpoint, a Victorian seaside resort. The old Red Cross Club is still there just a few yards from the town square. Here General Patton inspected troops formed up on the town square, and afterwards had a drink in the bar of the Crown Hotel — the same bar unchanged is still there to drink at today. Journeying beyond Warrenpoint on the Newry Road one reaches Narrowwater Keep and the entrance to Narrowwater Castle, once the home of 2,000 GIs. The castle is not open to the public but the area is overshadowed by the tragedy of August Bank Holiday 1979 when eighteen soldiers of the 2nd Parachute Regiment and 1st Queen's Own Highlanders were killed at this spot.

From Newry take the A27 to Tandragee where the Armistice Day Service was pictured. The site is in the centre of the town and cannot be missed as it is part of the main through road. From Tandragee take the A51 to Armagh City — the ecclesiastical capital of Ireland. The centre of the city is the Georgian Mall where Patton inspected and addressed his troops. Beyond Armagh, and approached by the A28 and thence some minor roads, is Tynan where many GIs were based in the grounds of Tynan Abbey. This area is astride the border and the Abbey has been destroyed and the grounds closed after a recent terrorist atrocity.

Left: **This is the entrance gate to the castle with Narrowwater Keep in the background. To the left of the picture is the site where the gate lodge to the castle once stood where many soldiers were killed on August 27, 1979 when it was blown up by a remote-controlled bomb detonated in a carefully planned ambush by terrorists. The wall on the left and the pillar have since been rebuilt.**



Return to Belfast by the M1 and at the Moira roundabout head for Lurgan. After passing through Moira, on the left-hand side is the small Nissen-hutted local hospital, once Waringsfield Military Hospital, where GIs were brought by the 12th USAAF via Maghaberry airfield. A few miles on is the village of Magheralin. Take a left turn here on the Dromore road and a mile or so outside on the left-hand side may be seen the lodge of what was Kircassock House, the USAAF Composite Command HQ. The gate lodge has the names of many GIs inscribed in the brickwork but, as this is private property, permission should be obtained before entering. Return to Belfast via the M1 and on the left-hand side, before the Lisburn turn off, may be seen Long Kesh, once the HQ of USAAF Composite Command and a fighter station, now HM Prison, The Maze.

Above: **Armistice Day 1943 in Tandragee, a small market town ten miles south of Craigavon. The men on parade are from the 6th Cavalry Regiment.** *Below:* **The picture is virtually an exact comparison except that the war memorial has been moved for a road re-alignment. Tandragee Castle, which lies through the impressive gates in the background, is now used as a potato crisp factory!**

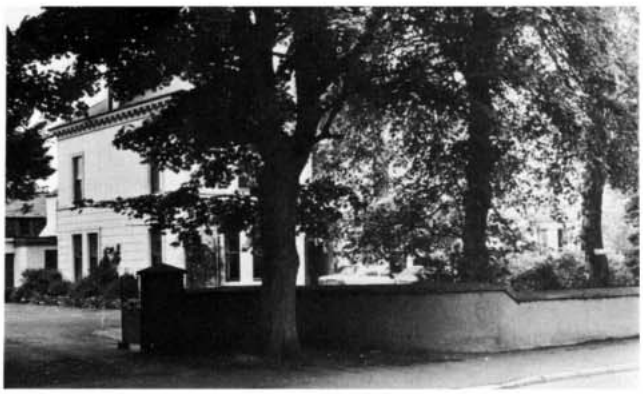
North-West Tour

Travel north from Belfast via the M2 and A26 to Ballymena. This is a prosperous industrial and market town and many of the old buildings used by the Americans are still in existence. Ballymena is the home of the Royal Irish Rangers and their depot is St. Patrick's Barracks. For obvious reasons security is tight but by writing in advance to the PR officer a visit might be arranged.

For aviation buffs a detour on to the A6 would be worthwhile to look at what remains of Toome airfield — a Combat Crew Replacement Centre. It is clearly visible with hangers and control tower remaining, on the left-hand side just after crossing the Bann bridge in Toome village.

Returning to the previous route, travel on from Ballymena to the Causeway Coast via Ballymoney and Coleraine. This is the principal holiday area of Northern Ireland where Portrush, Portstewart and Castlerock all have fine beaches and resort amenities. The GIs moved here in 1942 and made considerable use of the guest houses and small

Headquarters buildings for the 34th Division at Ballymena. *Above:* Although captioned Brookfield House, we believe it was actually called Brookvale. The complete house and grounds have now disappeared being replaced by Ballymena RUC station. The high wire netting is a protective screen against a rocket attack.



***Left:* Beechfield House was also taken over — seen here on March 28, 1942. *Above:* Today it is a dentist's surgery and house. The gate pillar, probably damaged by an American truck, has now been rebuilt behind the tree.**

St. Patrick's Barracks at Ballymena is still in use today by the Royal Irish (see also page 25). Permission to take photographs was kindly given by Major Patrick Dunseath seen *below* standing in for the long-forgotten American gun team practising with a British 25-pdr in March 1942. Picture was taken on the edge of the sports field alongside which an assault course has since been laid down between the remaining trees.

hotels until their hutted camps were completed.

The A2 leads on from Castlerock to Londonderry via Magilligan and Limavady. This area is an aviation enthusiast's paradise with the old Coastal Command and Fleet Air Arm stations of Limavady, Ballykelly, Eglinton and Maydown all visible from the A2. Limavady is disused, Ballykelly is an army base, Eglinton is a civilian airport and Maydown is an industrial site. In 1942 Eglinton and Maydown were the homes of 82nd Pursuit Group, USAAF.

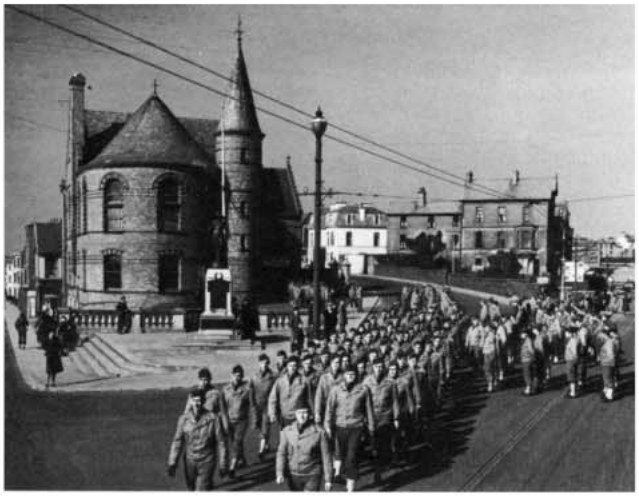
The city of Londonderry itself has featured considerably in the 'troubles' of the last decade but most areas of the city are quite accessible to the visitor. The US Navy dominated Londonderry during the war because of its importance as the major Atlantic escort base. Ebrington Barracks, once HMS Sea Eagle, is situated on the right-hand side inside the city boundary on the A2. It is not possible to visit it. The old operations room for the convoy escorts is situated in the basement of Magee College, now part of the New University of Ulster. A walking tour of the city centre will take you to all the city centre sites seen in the comparison photographs. Park at the Guildhall car park and walk up to the Diamond.

Just outside the city on the A40, heading to the T59 (the Republic of Ireland road number), is the old US Navy hospital at Creevagh. After passing through the fortified army checkpoint the site lies on the right-hand side of the road shortly before reaching the border. To see the old US Navy communications base (closed just a few years ago) head for the A6 to Belfast. It is situated on the right-hand side just before the roundabout before Altnagelvin Hospital and is clearly visible. Return to Belfast by the A5 to Omagh and stop off at the Knock Na Moe Castle Hotel which unfortunately has recently had its historic part destroyed by terrorist activity. Then take the B122 to Fintona where the bridge in the comparison picture is easily found.

Although no US wartime pictures could be traced of the area, and thus we have no comparisons, a detour to Fermanagh is well worthwhile. It played a vital role in WWII and many US and British servicemen remember it well. Lough Erne was a major flying boat base (Castle Archdale and Killadeas) and GIs were based all around the county. Ely Lodge was a major base and the remains of the hutted camp are clearly visible from the A46. Shortly after joining this road in Enniskillen, one passes the playing fields of Portora Royal School where General Eisenhower inspected the 8th Infantry Division. Lunch was taken in the Royal Hotel, Enniskillen, still open to the public.

Return to Belfast via the A4 and M1, but detours to Cookstown and Cluntoe (another Combat Crew Replacement Centre) can easily be fitted in. Another possible detour (although one which is not really worthwhile) is to Langford Lodge airfield once the major USAAF Air Depot and probably as important as Burtonwood. However, it is now the property of the Martin Baker Company and visitors cannot gain access under any circumstances. Nearby is Rams Island in Lough Neagh, once a US Navy flying boat base.

There are other old American sites which have not been pictured for lack of contemporary photographs and therefore not mentioned in this guide. Most of them are probably accessible and any local Tourist Information Centre will be delighted to help you find them. Visitors are very welcome in Northern Ireland, so if you're interested take the plunge and come.



Left: **Following a lecture at the town hall, Company L moves off to its quarters.** *Above:* **Except for catering for the increasing demands of the motor car, this corner of Portrush has changed little.**

Above: **Like almost every seaside town in Britain during the war, empty hotels and guest houses provided excellent quarters for the large numbers of troops requiring accommodation. Here men of Company K, of the 168th Infantry take over 'Coolsythe House' Portrush. The iron railings, intact when this picture was taken in March 1942, would later be removed for scrap for the war effort.**

Above: **A nicely posed photograph of members of Company L of the 168th on the seafront at Portrush.** *Below:* **Neither the footpath at Landsdowne Crescent nor the old lifeboat station at the side of it has changed in the interim.**

Left: **Bright Cottage, Portstewart, became the HQ of one of the 168th's anti-tank companies.** *Above:* **Today it is a private house.**

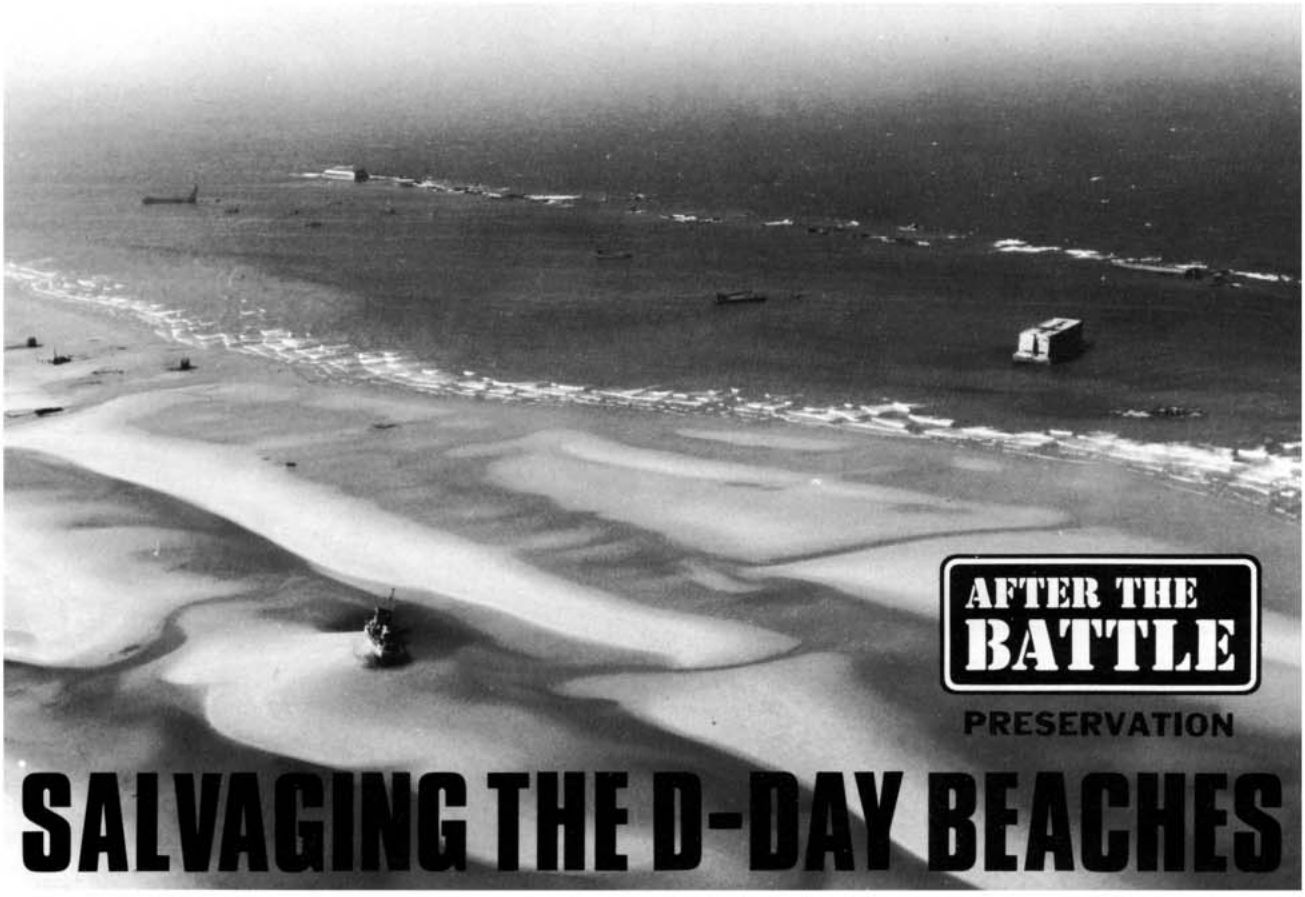
Above: **Possibly the same 37mm anti-tank gun drawn up on the mile-long beach at Portstewart. This picture, as all those in this feature on Northern Ireland, is a Signal Corps photo from the US Army photo archives in Washington.** *Right:* **The Portstewart beach has recently been purchased by the National Trust and is one of the most popular in the province. It was the view from this spot late one evening that inspired Jimmy Kennedy to write the song 'Red Sails in the Sunset'.**

Further information on accommodation, routes and guide books may be obtained from:

Northern Ireland Tourist Board,
River House,
48 High Street,
Belfast BT1 2DS.
Telephone: Belfast 46609.
Telex: 748087.
or
Northern Ireland Tourist Board,
Ulster Office,
11 Berkeley Street,
London W1X 6BU.
Telephone: 01-493 0601.

Above left: Hands across the sea in Londonderry. A British and American military policeman behind the Guildhall. *Above right:* The building has been damaged several times over in recent years by terrorist attacks; hence a security fence has had to be erected to surround and protect the entire building which is used for council meetings as well as containing a theatre.

We thought it would be rather nice to let this little boy in Coleraine have the last word . . . or rather the last gesture. Ian Henderson comments that he did not ask his wife to do an imitation as they matched this shot of the 168th Infantry Headquarters!



SALVAGING THE D-DAY BEACHES

Of all the areas subjected to naval operations during the Second World War, the coastline of France bordering Normandy is possibly the most prolific in wrecks and abandoned war material. Scene of the largest invasion in history, the deliberate sinking of blockships and caissons for artificial breakwaters alone have added greatly to the number of wrecks still marked on the Admiralty charts.

Immediately after the war, clearance rights were obtained by a Belgian company and, for ten years, Van Loo of Antwerp cleared Omaha and Utah beaches. In the 1950s, Enterprise J. Demota purchased the exploitation rights from the French Government and, based at Courseulles, M. Jean Demota with a 25-strong workforce began to clear the jetties and blockships opposite the port.

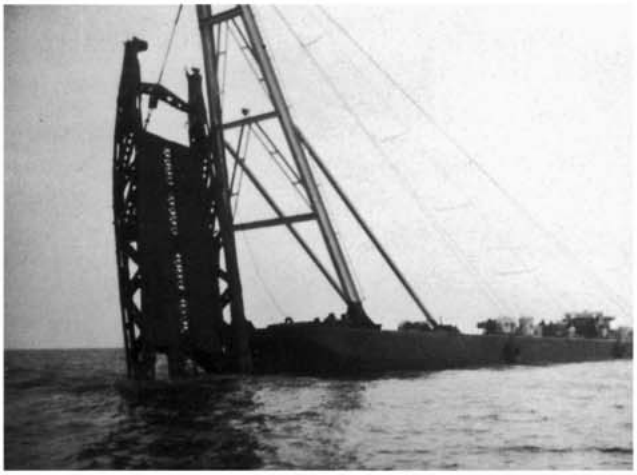
In 1970 his company was responsible for the recovery of the first armoured vehicle from the sea — a Canadian Sherman DD now preserved as a monument at Courseulles. The tank had been snagged by fishermen's nets some three miles offshore, it being one of several DD Shermans sunk in that area.

Leo Gariepy, an ex-sergeant who had commanded the first DD to land at Courseulles on June 6, 1944, and who had decided to make his life in France after the war, was instrumental in raising money to finance the recovery. Then M. Demota was approached by the Mayor of Courseulles to undertake the actual lifting of the tank while Canadian engineers brought in a recovery tractor from Germany to move the tank once it was ashore. With multi-pulley blocks and making use of subsequent high tides, the tank was lifted from the seabed and slowly brought to the beach over a period of a week. Once on dry land, the Canadian engineers towed it by brute force to free the tracks. In November 1971, M. Demota's help was recognised by the award of a plaque by the Canadian Minister of National Defence, Donald S. Macdonald.

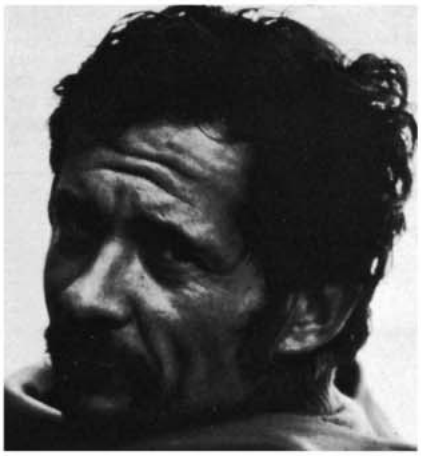
Top: **Wreckage from the June 6, 1944 landings at St. Laurent being salvaged after the war (Ray Delvert).**

In 1975, recovery rights for the entire Normandy coastline were re-allocated into alternate blocks (see map) between M. Jean Demota and M. Jacques Lemonchois who had been diving in the area for more than twenty years. They had the joint responsibility of clearing wrecks which were a hazard to shipping and also for raising salvage. However,

Left: **Dedication of the 'Leo Gariepy' Sherman in 1971 at Courseulles. Gariepy** *(right)* **was instrumental in promoting the project although Jean Demota, who held the salvage rights to the D-Day beaches, carried out the actual recovery.**



Above left: **Recovery of a section of Mulberry floating roadway and** *right* **a Sherman in the early 1950s by Jean Demota.**



Following the re-division of the Normandy salvage rights in 1975, Jacques Lemonchois *(left)* **was allocated alternate blocks with Jean Demota (see chart overleaf).** *Right:* **The operation to raise the DD Sherman underway in July 1980.** *Below:* **By the time we reached the scene the Sherman had been brought to the beach at Port-en-Bessin where Jean Demota showed it to us.**

the high rate of inflation over the last few years has meant that the cost of raising war wreckage now far outweighs its scrap value and all recovery has been restricted to non-ferrous items only.

Jacques Lemonchois has always had history in mind and has carefully collected parts from recovered vessels, ships' bells being especially prized trophies. Already possessing the nucleus of an interesting collection, he is therefore in a favourable position to satisfy the interests of World War II enthusiasts and now plans to open a museum dedicated to that end. Using a site at Commes, just a mile inland from Port-en-Bessin, construction is now well under way for his Musee Sous-marin de la Guerre which he plans to open in July 1982.

For a long time, Jacques has believed that there is a limit to the display and presentation of pristine exhibits in conventional museums and he therefore intends to display war relics 'as recovered' from the sea. He feels that so much of historical interest, retrieved in the past purely for scrap, has been lost that the time has come for something positive to be done. 'Preserve' is really the wrong word to describe the exhibits which will be seen in the new museum as it is intended to leave these rusty and barnacle-encrusted relics to be seen in an entirely new aspect. Already, with the co-operation of M. Demota who will also be supplying material for display, the museum ground is filled with engines from destroyers; guns — both naval and army pieces recovered from sunken vessels; parts of aircraft and tanks, and it was the news of the recovery of a Sherman for the museum in July 1980 which led us hot-foot to the scene.

The story really begins over forty years previously when Canadian troops made a frontal assault on the French port of Dieppe. One of the experiences learnt from this costly exercise was that there was a need for specialised armour to surmount beach obstacles, traverse soft sand and pebbles, knock out pillboxes and bridge anti-tank ditches, and do a dozen other jobs which ordinary tanks and infantry could not do on their own. The resulting development of specialised armoured vehicles by the 79th Armoured Division under Major-General Percy Hobart has been claimed as one of the major technical innovations of the war and one which saved many lives and which made D-Day the success it was. One of the most remarkable devices was an inflatable canvas skirt fitted to Shermans which enabled the 32-ton tank to float and propel itself ashore by means of twin propellers driven from the main engine — hence DD for Duplex Drive. While Hobart's 'funnies' were used extensively on the British and Canadian beaches, only at a late stage in the planning were Sherman DDs adopted by the American commanders who had intended to rely solely on a massive head-on assault by the tough American GI.

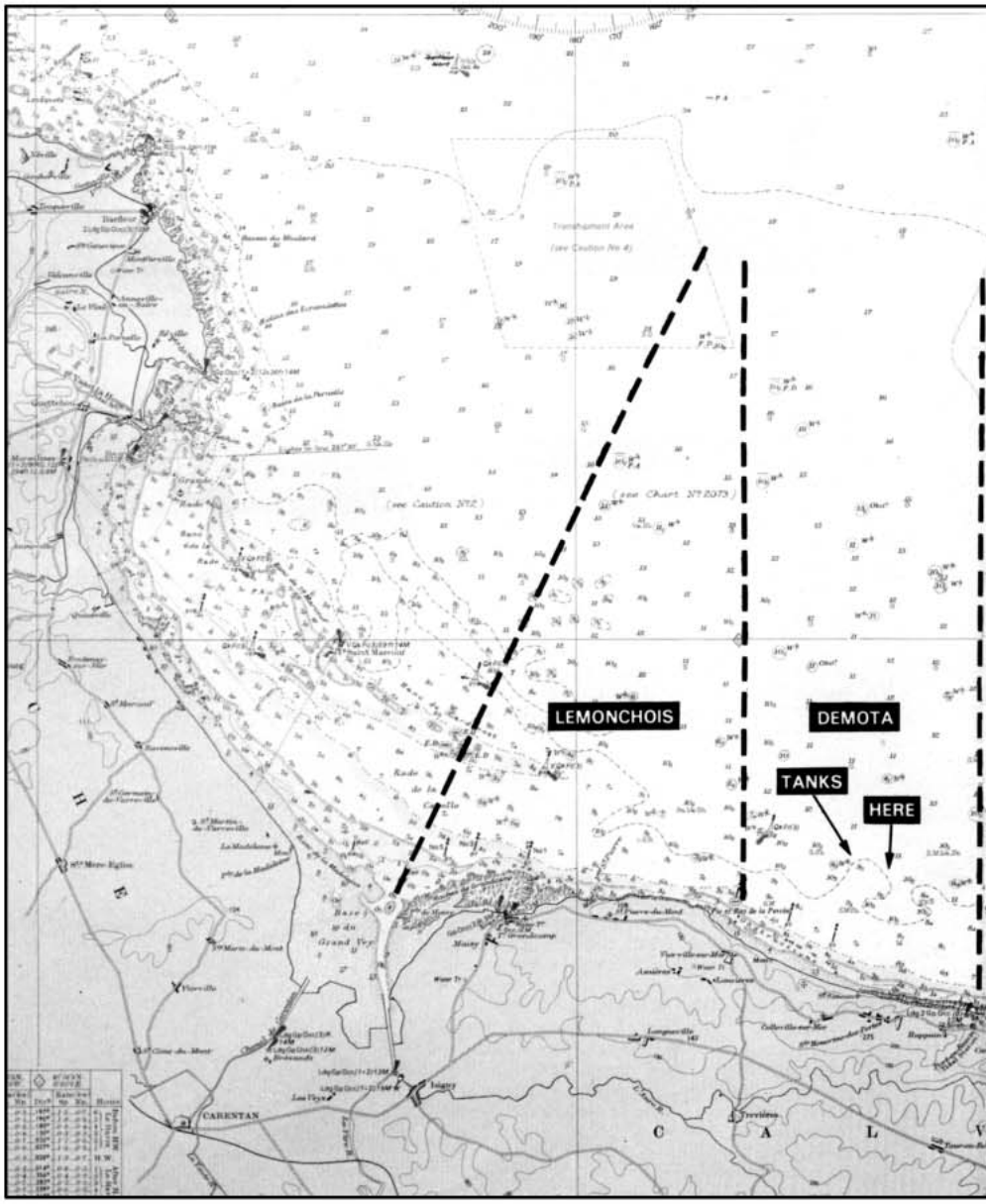
In the event, while twenty-eight DDs of the thirty-two in the first wave on Utah reached the beach, only five are reported as having come ashore on Omaha out of the thirty-two which were launched. The official US history states that the tanks were designed to be released 5,000-6,000 yards from the beach and that those destined for Omaha were launched 6,000 yards offshore.

Well, thanks to Jacques Lemonchois, the history books will have to be re-written as he has located two tanks up to *nine* miles from the beach and it seems highly unlikely that a thirty-ton lump of metal could be shifted 8,000 yards further out by the tide! The US Force Commander had left it to individual army commanders to determine when to launch the DDs and, while some decided not to launch at all in the rough sea because of their pathetic one foot of freeboard, others obviously committed the men to the deep by expecting the tanks to swim in such conditions some 15,000 yards.

Anyway, the story now jumps to 1979 when M. Demota heard a rumour that a US consortium was planning an expedition to raise tanks sunk off the Normandy coastline. The rights of Jean Demota and Jacques Lemonchois extend right out to the twelve-mile limit and they reminded the Prefecture at Cherbourg that they held exclusive rights under their agreement with the French Government. It seems that the American group was claiming that this war material was 'part of the US heritage' and that they therefore had every right to recover it from the area. With the backing of commercial interests in the States, a US diver was brought in to search for sunken tanks and it is believed that the eventual idea of raising these was for sale to American collectors.

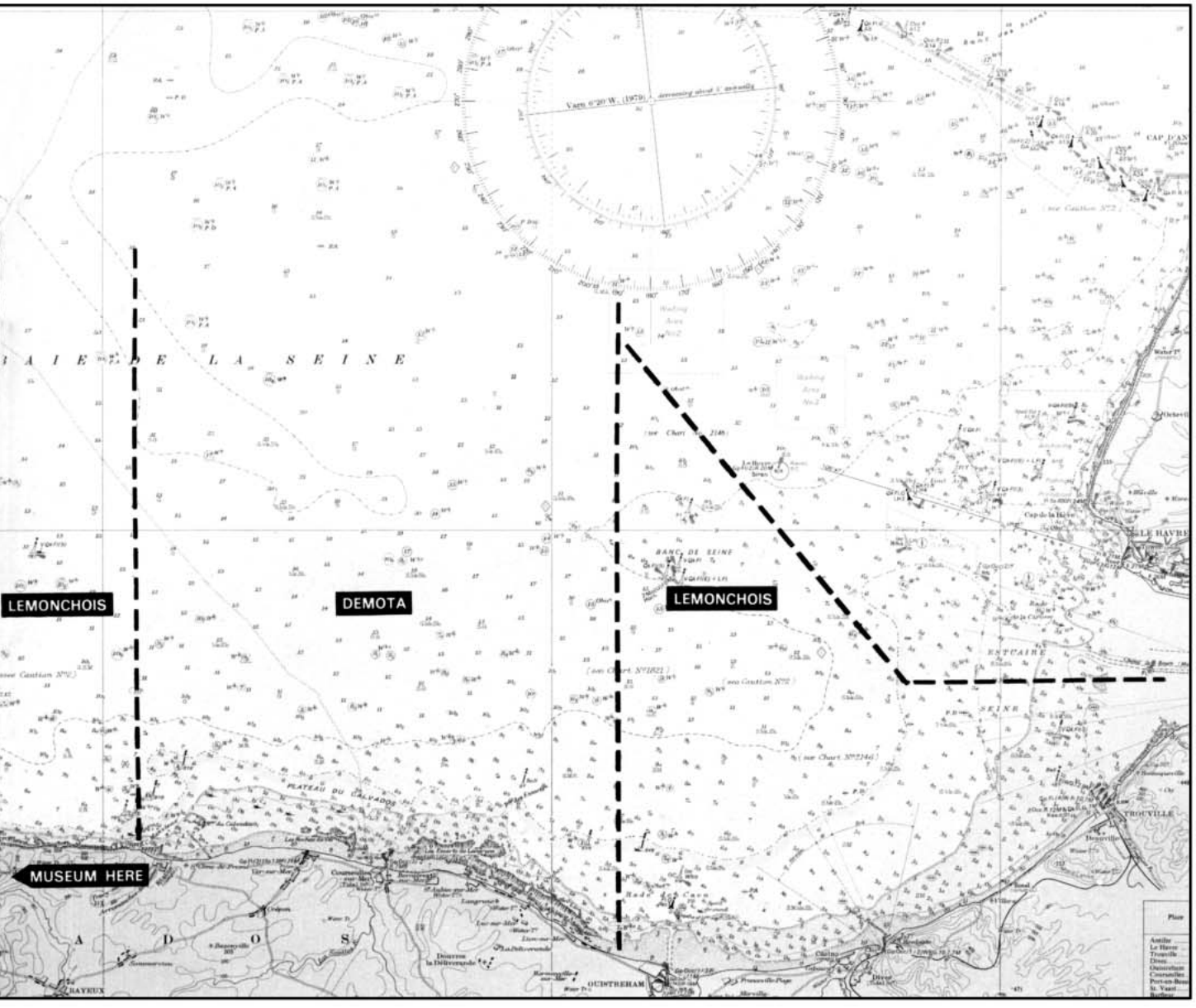
All told, Jacques Lemonchois had already located and plotted seventeen tanks between Arromanches and Grandcamp between four and seven miles out of which ten are amphibious, the remainder being engineers' armour, such as bulldozers, which must have either been sunk with their LSTs or have driven off the ramps believing they were almost ashore. (He also knows the location of another eight DD Shermans off the Canadian Juno beach at Courseulles.) He has never found a tank with a closed turret and, in the dreadful moment of sinking, only the commander could have stood a chance of escaping as the tank plummeted to the seabed. Even if it landed upright, the inrush of water down the hatch would surely have drowned the remaining crewmen.

After Jacques Lemonchois had pinpointed the sunken tanks, he selected one for recovery, fitting the lifting strops through the turret. Being firmly embedded in the seabed the strain was too great and the turret was pulled from the chassis. When we saw it *(above)* it was in the new museum ground.



Right: **Reproduced from Admiralty Chart 2613 (Crown Copyright).**

Relics found encrusted inside the turret included this Thompson sub-machine gun *(left)* and the eyepiece to the 75mm gunsight.



Having heard of the intentions of the American 'pirates', Jacques decided the time had come to re-assert his rights in his area and he chose a pair of Shermans half-a-mile apart, some 3½ miles offshore at Coleville-sur-Mer, lying upright in thirteen fathoms — about eighty feet deep.

Visibility underwater was extremely bad when recovery operations began in July 1980. The lifting eyes had rusted through in the centres where the protective grease had been disturbed during loading operations in 1944 and, as the first tank was silted up to the top of the tracks, there was no alternative but to fix the lifting strop between the two open hatches in the turret. However, the hull was so firmly embedded that this only served to pull the turret neatly from its mounting. Not to be outdone, Jacques moved operations to the second tank which was successfully freed from its watery grave and floated to the beach at Port-en-Bessin where we photographed it in August. However, as soon as the tank was ashore, the French authorities welded the covers shut until the interior could be examined for munitions and, reportedly, human remains. Jacques Lemonchois himself had absolutely no doubt that nothing would be found of the crew for when he planned to recover a Sherman, he deliberately chose one in which no trace of the men existed. Jacques knows of other Shermans and some ship-wrecks in which skeletons or bones still remain. As far as he is concerned these men could have no better sanctuary than the sea and he had long since decided not to disturb such wrecks.

By October the military authorities had removed the 75mm shells and, after declaring the interior safe, allowed Jacques to move the tank to its new home where it now has pride of place in the museum awaiting its first visitors in July 1982. As fas as M. Lemonchois is concerned he recovered this one tank for historical purposes only and says he will not recover any more. He is very concerned about commercial exploitation of the wrecks and considers information as to their precise locations a secret. He feels that these relics have an even greater historical significance if left where they are — below the sea.

The Sherman was transported to Commes *(below)* after which the interior was cleaned out when a vast amount of equipment came to light *(above)*. Being buried under sand the items were remarkably well preserved.

WRECK RECOVERY 1940

BY ANDY SAUNDERS

To the present day aviation archaeologist the work of wartime aircraft salvage gangs is always a matter of great interest, although as an aspect of research into the Battle of Britain it is curiously a subject about which little has been written.

The basic procedure when an RAF aircraft did not return from a training or operational flight was that its unit would notify the Air Ministry, who in turn informed Headquarters, No. 43 Maintenance Group, Cowley, Oxford, whose responsibility it was to notify the RAF maintenance unit which covered the area in which the aircraft had been lost. The aircraft would then be inspected by the MU's crash inspector and arrangements made for its collection and disposal.

The procedure for enemy aircraft was slightly different in that they were first inspected by an RAF technical intelligence officer from the 1(g) branch of Air Intelligence who compiled a report and who had to 'release' the aircraft before it could be dealt with by an MU. An AI 1(g) officer was attached to each MU, in order that each part of the country could easily be covered rather than rely on officers working from the headquarters of AI 1(g) at a converted school in Harrow Weald, north London.

Whilst the recovery of wrecked aircraft in the hectic 1940 period in south-east England was basically the responsibility of the RAF, the amount of aerial activity necessitated the sub-contracting of some clearance work to civilian firms. *Above:* No. 49 Maintenance Unit clear the wreckage of X4255 of No. 66 Squadron after it crash-landed at Hawkinge on October 11, 1940. Pilot Officer H. R. Allen was severely concussed. *Below:* Coincidentally another pilot by the name of Allen, this time Pilot Officer J. L., was credited with forcing down an He 59 floatplane at Walmer on July 9, 1940. This is believed to be one of its floats being moved by A. V. Nicholls and Company at the Faygate depot.

Above: **No. 49 Maintenance Unit dump of wrecked aircraft at Faygate, Sussex in 1940.**
Below: **Forty years later it is the location for the timber mill of J. & S. Agate and, at first sight, all trace of its former role would seem to be non-existent (Paul Strudwick).**

Strict procedures for dealing with crashed aircraft were laid down and, generally speaking, were rigidly adhered to. Responsibility for guarding downed aircraft rested with the Army until taken over by the RAF or salvage organisation. Prisoners of war were required to be handed over at once to the nearest military unit for eventual interrogation by AI 2(g), later re-designated AI 1(k), operating from Trent Park, Cockfosters (today a teacher's training college — see *After the Battle* No. 2) in north London.

The brunt of the responsibility for the clearance of wrecks in the main battle areas of Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire during 1940 fell to No. 49 Maintenance Unit, based at RAF Faygate, near Horsham in Sussex, and commanded by Squadron Leader Goodman.

The base at Faygate was established on September 28, 1939, with the arrival of an advance party — the parent unit being RAF Tangmere — and its name was changed on October 21 from No. 1 Salvage Centre to No. 49 Maintenance Unit. Situated beside the main London to Chichester railway line, the site grew into a collection of wooden huts dominated by a canvas Bessonau-type hanger. Few domestic facilities were provided; all the personnel being billeted out in nearby Hor-

Not so. When Andy Saunders visited Agates in October 1981, he found the old guardroom still standing although disguised with an attractive weatherboarding. Then a cursory examination of the yard resulted in quite a pile of metal wreckage (Paul Strudwick).

AUGUST 11

1/ZG2

Messerschmitt Bf 110D. Returned to base damaged following combat with RAF fighters off Portland. Crew unhurt. Aircraft 10% damaged.

Messerschmitt Bf 110C. Damaged in combat over the Channel off Portland. Returned safely to base. Crew unhurt. Aircraft 15% damaged.

Messerschmitt Bf 110C. Attacked by RAF fighters over the Channel off Portland and returned to base damaged. Crew unhurt. Aircraft 10% damaged.

1/ZG2

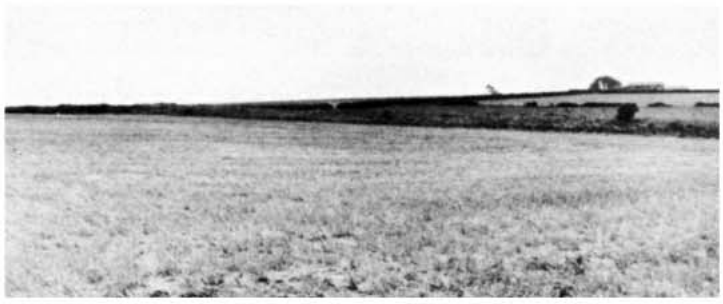
Messerschmitt Bf 110C. Shot down into the Channel by RAF fighters during operations over Portland. Lt. Jess and Gefr. Kossar both killed. Aircraft lost.

2/ZG2

Messerschmitt Bf 110C. Failed to return from operational sortie over Portland area. Presumed shot down into the Channel by RAF fighters. Fw. Teichert and Gefr. Kloss both missing. Aircraft a write-off.

'The devil in the cornfield'. Surrounded by the bounty of a rich harvest, the JG52 'Emil', Red 14 of Unteroffizier Zaunbrecher lies remarkably intact on Mays Farm, near Selmeston village, Sussex, where he was forced down after combat over Hastings on August 12. The buildings of Stonery Farm can just be seen on the right (Eastbourne Gazette).

Below: **Stonery Farm still remains on the skyline on September 18, 1979. The main Lewes-Hastings railway line runs in the cutting across the middle distance.**



560

It is always interesting to be able to follow through on previous incidents described in our publications. *Above:* Page 560 of 'The Battle of Britain — Then and Now' showed Unteroffizier Zaunbreckers Bf 109 down in a field at Selmerston. Now we know what happened to that aircraft. No. 49 MU cleared it to their depot and it was subsequently displayed on a tour to Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow. While on an overnight stop at Lydney, Gloucestershire, souvenir hunters tried to cut out the devil emblem of JG 52. When it returned to Faygate, *(below)* this posed picture *(right)* was taken of LAC Cookson with the engine cowling with Corporal Anson pretending to remove the insignia.

sham. Apart from the few men who remained permanently on site at Faygate, the majority were divided into a number of crash parties of eight to ten men under the command of a senior NCO, who were mostly working away from the unit on salvage operations. There were also a number of crash inspectors, mostly of pilot officer rank, who visited each aircraft to be recovered and who assessed any particular problems and decided on the equipment and manpower required.

As the amount of wrecked aircraft littering southern England in 1940 grew with the unprecedented aerial activity of the summer months, No. 49 MU was particularly hard pressed. In addition, in the space of a few days, it lost a Ford V8 staff car and a Commer low-loader during the attack on Hawkinge aerodrome on August 12, followed by three Commer low-loaders, a Coles crane and a Bedford 3-tonner during the raid on Tangmere on August 16 when two of the unit's drivers were killed.

To assist with the mounting workload the Air Ministry engaged a number of civilian contractors from the road haulage industry — including Coast Transport Limited, Portsmouth Carriers and A. V. Nicholls and Company — an arrangement which ceased in March 1941 following the lull in aerial activity and the formation of No. 86 MU, based at Sundridge, Kent, to share part of No. 49 MU's area of responsibility.

A. V. Nicholls and Company operated from 100 North Road, Brighton, under the direct control of No. 49 MU, and all the records relating to the company's activities during

With only hand tools to do the work, the extraction of wreckage was an arduous task. *Left:* **This is the Nicholls gang at work at Bellers Bush, Sandwich, trying to extricate the engine of Pilot Officer Armstrong's Spitfire which came down on November 14, 1940.** *Right:* **Modern constructions make any present-day investigation of the site impossible (Paul Strudwick).**

1940 fortunately survived and were passed into the safe keeping of the author by the late Mr. Nicholls in 1976. In contrast to the coldly clinical official records maintained throughout this period by No. 49 MU, they are considerably detailed and consist of Aircraft Collection Orders issued by No. 49 MU, correspondence, and reports from the company to the unit.

Unlike the RAF recovery parties those of A. V. Nicholls and other civilian firms consisted of untrained men working with little equipment and often under conditions of extreme difficulty. Usually only two men were despatched on a recovery job and they were expected to dismantle, cut up or dig out a wreck depending on the circumstances of the crash.

Basic equipment for the A. V. Nicholls recovery party would be a pair of sheerlegs, oxy-acetylene cutting equipment, buckets, spades and Leyland lorry with trailer. Mr. Jack Austen and Mr. Bob Sawyers carried out most of the eighty-odd recovery jobs undertaken by the company between September 1940 and March 1941, one of which provided something of an encore to the events of the night of September 24, when a Heinkel He 111 of 6 Staffel, KG6, crashed at the Gordon's Boys School, Chobham, Surrey, after being hit by anti-aircraft fire. The aircraft had crashed in flames and Bob Sawyers, while working on dismantling the wreckage with cutting gear, then proceeded to start a blaze of his own by causing a large grass fire!

The recovery of a Messerschmitt Bf 109 at Pinewood Garage, London Road, Maidstone, on November 2 entailed the Nicholls gang having to excavate by hand to a depth of fifteen feet to recover the wreckage; and another excavation by hand which caused problems was the attempt to dig out Pilot Officer Armstrong's No. 74 Squadron Spitfire, P7386, from where it had been shot down at Sandwich on November 14.

Superficial surface wreckage from P7386 was cleared by Austen and Sawyers on November 25 and, although excavations were carried out to a depth of fourteen feet, the engine remained unlocated and work ceased. Not satisfied with the results, Squadron Leader Goodman ordered that digging operations should continue and work began again on November 27 until the engine was located at twenty feet. At this depth water began to flow into the excavation and, despite the use of a pump, the engine could not be extricated from the wet soil. Eventually work ceased on December 2 when the hole was filled in, burying the remaining wreckage.

Although re-excavation of this site at Bellers Bush has recently been contemplated it would be almost impossible to conduct. The top of the hole has been filled with all manner of rubbish, including the stumps of sixteen apple trees, and the shored up entrance to the excavation is now used as a compost pit. In addition a 500-gallon oil storage tank for the heating of nearby greenhouses now stands at the edge of the hole.

Getting the show on the road — 1940 style. Believed to be the 3/JE52 machine which forced-landed at Penshurst on October 27, 1940.

While salvaging a Dornier Do 17 (5K+ CS, No. 2573 of 8/KG3) which had crashed into the gardens of houses in Wansunt Road, Bexley, on November 3, the Nicholls gang had a lucky escape when a stick of bombs fell across the salvage operations during the night. Luckily everyone was off the site but daylight revealed a scene of devastation with one of the Dornier's Bramo-Fafnir engines lying in the cab of the Leyland lorry. One of the many relics acquired by Bob Sawyers during those days was the tip of a propellor blade from this machine, afterwards mounted on perspex from the cockpit. The blade is holed by two .303 bullets and has the Bramo 'Flying B' emblem from the engine fixed to it.

In accidents involving No. 49 MU, two airmen were electrocuted at Studland, Dorset, when the jib of their Coles crane touched an overhead cable during the salvage of a Heinkel 111 which had crashed there on September 25; and on another occasion an airman was crushed to death when an aero engine rolled from the lorry onto which it had been loaded.

One problem encountered by military and civilian gangs alike was the wholesale removal of souvenirs from crashed aircraft, and such was the seriousness of the problem that the Minister for Aircraft Production issued an appeal on October 6 urging the public not to remove material or equipment. This was later followed up by the issue of *Standing Orders for the Guarding and Salvage of Crashed Aircraft*, in which the subject of souvenirs was covered. Although it was apparently the intention to supply souvenirs from enemy machines to the personnel who had guarded them, or to any other individual who could lay claim to one, souvenirs could only be released upon application to the RAF AI 1(g) intelligence officer.

However, Beaverbook's appeal on October 6 apparently did little to stir the patriotism of the tenant at Cooling Court, Kent, to whom Squadron Leader Goodman found it necessary to issue a letter on October 7 requesting that the bearer, Jack Austen, be handed parts of a Junkers 88 in the tenant's possession. The aircraft in question was of 9/KG77, No. 5104, 3Z+ DT which had been shot down at Cooling Court on September 18. It would seem, though, that little heed was paid to this demand, for when the present occupier of Cooling Court, Mr. Whitebread, was shown the letter in 1979 he disappeared

Below: **A souvenir taken at the time and made up into an attractive display was the bullet-holed prop tip cut off by one of the Nicholls gang from the blade in the photo on the right.**

Above: **Dornier Do 17 5K+CS suffered more damage after it had crashed into the garden of No. 16 Wansunt Road, Bexley, on November 3, 1940 when another raider dropped a load of bombs on the spot.** *Below:* **Peace and quiet at Bexley in October 1981.**

Above: **Oberleutnant Bartels crash-landed his Messerschmitt (6296F) wheels up in a field at Northdown just outside Margate.** *Below:* **No. 49 MU were soon on the scene lowering the undercarriage before dismantling the aircraft.**

into his attic and emerged with armfuls of Junkers 88 — including fuel pumps and filters and an elevator trim tab!

Another relic of this incident exists at the offices of the Directorate of Canadian Air Force History, Ottawa, in the form of Unteroffizier Glaeseker's 'Frontausweis' identity card, he being the only survivor of the crash.

Typical of the aircraft which suffered from the attentions of souvenir hunters was Gefreiter Karl Raisinger's Bf 109 of 3/JG77, No. 5104, which came down at Saltdean, Brighton, on October 25. On the Collection Order dated October 28 is scribbled a pencilled note: 'Revi gunsight, clock and parachute have been removed from aircraft.'

As wrecked British and German aircraft arrived daily at Faygate from service and civilian gangs, a vast graveyard of jumbled machines soon began to accumulate; and the photographs taken in 1940 of scrapyards such as this are almost enough to give an enthusiast apoplexy, especially considering that nothing remains of them today.

All the wreckage was consigned to scrap and ended up for re-processing by the Northern Aluminium Company Limited at another vast depot at Adderbury in Oxfordshire — along with the mountains of pots, pans, hot-water bottles, car badges and articles of all kinds which were donated by the public in response to an appeal for aluminium, and which were all laboriously pick-axed by MU personnel to ensure that they were not 're-processed' by an alternative route! The final product of aluminium ingots was then re-issued from Adderbury to the aircraft industry by the Ministry of Aircraft Production.

The Adderbury dump is now the location of the company headquarters of J. Bibby's Agricultural Feeds and Seeds. At Faygate nothing remains of the No. 49 Maintenance Unit establishment and the site has become a timber yard, but tangible reminders of recovery work undertaken by the salvage gangs do crop up; and the broken chains, ropes, buckets, sandbags, tools, timber and empty ration tins often found during 'digs' where they were discarded or mislaid some forty years ago have their own significance.

No: 49, Maintenance Unit,

R.A.F. Faygate,

HORSHAM.

7th October 1940.

The Tenant or Farmer,
Cooling Court,
Cooling,
Nr. CHATHAM.

Dear Sir,

The bearer of this note, Mr. J. Austen, has official instructions to clear the crashed aircraft from your farm to-day. This wreck was surveyed by the writer yesterday and I understand that certain parts of the crashed aircraft have been removed by members of the public and that you yourself have in your possession parts of this machine.

I shall be pleased if you will hand over to the bearer, those parts in your possession. You no doubt heard the Ministry of Aircraft Production statement issued yesterday on the subject of removing material and equipment from crashed 'planes.

Thanking you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

An attic reveals its secrets. In spite of this letter served upon the occupier of Cooling Court, when Andy Saunders called at the house this mint elevator trim tab was one of the items that came to light.

Above: **A souvenir hunter's dream. Scrapped aircraft finally ended up in the melting pot and those in southern England were consigned to Adderbury for reprocessing by the Northern Aluminium Company. Here an employee chops up a wing. Adderbury West church spire in the background (Imperial War Museum).**

Below: **In 1954 the Ministry of Supply stated that there were no longer any temporary aeroplane graveyards in the United Kingdom. The Adderbury site is now the headquarters of an agricultural company. The church can be seen in the distance (Banbury Guardian).**

SECOND
WORLD
WAR